

GURU TATTVA



Swami Sivananda

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Published by

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192

Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand, Himalayas, India

www.sivanandaonline.org, www.dlshq.org

First Edition : 1962

Seventh Edition : 2004

Eighth Edition : 2012

[500 Copies]

©The Divine Life Trust Society

ISBN 81-7052-069-X

ES52

PRICE: ₹35/-

Published by Swami Padmanabhananda for
The Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, and
printed by him at the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy
Press, P.O. Shivanandanagar, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal,
Uttarakhand, Himalayas, India
For online orders and Catalogue : visit dlsbooks.org

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

Born on the 8th September, 1887, in the illustrious family of Sage Appayya Dikshitar and several other renowned saints and savants, Sri Swami Sivananda had a natural flair for a life devoted to the study and practice of Vedanta. Added to this was an inborn eagerness to serve all and an innate feeling of unity with all mankind.

His passion for service drew him to the medical career; and soon he gravitated to where he thought that his service was most needed. Malaya claimed him. He had earlier been editing a health journal and wrote extensively on health problems. He discovered that people needed right knowledge most of all; dissemination of that knowledge he espoused as his own mission.

It was divine dispensation and the blessing of God upon mankind that the doctor of body and mind renounced his career and took to a life of renunciation to qualify for ministering to the soul of man. He settled down at Rishikesh in 1924, practised intense austerities and shone as a great Yogi, saint, sage and Jivanmukta.

In 1932 Swami Sivananda started the Sivanandashram. In 1936 was born The Divine Life Society. In 1948 the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was organised. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge and training of people in Yoga and Vedanta were their aim and object. In 1950 Swamiji undertook a lightning tour of India and Ceylon. In 1953 Swamiji convened a 'World Parliament of Religions'. Swamiji is the author of over 300 volumes and has disciples all over the world, belonging to all nationalities, religions and creeds. To read Swamiji's works is to drink at the Fountain of Wisdom Supreme. On 14th July, 1963 Swamiji entered Mahasamadhi.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

In spite of much that has been written on the concept of a spiritual Guru, there is still a good deal of confusion, misunderstanding, and skepticism in the public mind on this vital matter.

Is a Guru absolutely necessary? Who is a Satguru? How far can he help his Chela (disciple)? What are the duties of a disciple? What is the meaning of Initiation? Want of clear-cut and definite answers to these and related questions often impedes the spiritual progress of earnest aspirants.

Under the circumstances, the present book by Satguru Sivanandaji Maharaj should come as a boon to many. Within its pages, the reader will find an authoritative, succinct and bold elucidation of the entire subject of Guru-disciple relationship.

We have great pleasure in releasing this book for the benefit of spiritually thirsty men and women all over the world. May the blessings of the Lord and the Brahma-Vidya gurus be upon all!

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Chapter One

THE ROLE OF THE GURU

*Ajnana-timirandhasya jnananjanasalakaya;
Chakshurunmilitam yena tasmai sri gurave namah.*

Prostrations to that Guru who, by the collyrium-rod of Knowledge, opens the eyes of those who are rendered blind by the darkness of ignorance (Guru Gita).

The Guru is God Himself manifesting in a personal form to guide the aspirant. Grace of God takes the form of Guru. To see the Guru is to see God. The Guru is united with God. He inspires devotion in others. His presence purifies all.

The Guru is verily a link between the individual and the Immortal. He is a being who has raised himself from this into That, and thus has a free and unhampered access to both the realms. He stands, as it were, upon the threshold of immortality; and bending down, he raises the struggling individuals with his one hand, and with the other lifts them up into the empyrean of everlasting joy and infinite Truth-Consciousness.

THE SATGURU

Mere study of books cannot make one a Guru. One who has studied the Vedas and who has direct

knowledge of Atman through Anubhava can only be enrolled as a Guru. A Jivanmukta or a liberated sage is the real Guru or spiritual preceptor. He is the Satguru. He is identical with Brahman or the Supreme Self. He is a Knower of Brahman.

Possession of Siddhis is not the test to declare the greatness of a sage or to prove he has attained Self-realisation. Satgurus do not exhibit any miracles or Siddhis. Sometimes they may exhibit them in order to convince the aspirants of the existence of super-physical things, give them encouragement, and instill faith in their hearts. A Satguru is endowed with countless Siddhis. He possesses all divine Aisvarya, all the wealth of the Lord.

The Satguru is Brahman Himself. He is an ocean of bliss, knowledge and mercy. He is the captain of your soul. He is the fountain of joy. He removes all your troubles, sorrows and obstacles. He shows you the right divine path. He tears your veil of ignorance. He makes you immortal and divine. He transmutes your lower, diabolical nature. He gives you the rope of knowledge and saves you when you are drowning in this ocean of Samsara. Do not consider him to be only a man. If you take him as a man, you are a beast. Worship your Guru and bow to him with reverence.

Guru is God. A word from him is a word from God. He need not teach anything. Even his presence or company is elevating, inspiring and stirring. The very company itself is self-illumination. Living in his

company is spiritual education. Read 'Sri Granth Sahib'. You will come to know the greatness of Guru.

Man can learn only from a man, and hence God teaches through a human body. In your Guru, you have human ideal of perfection. He is the pattern from which you wish to mould yourself. Your mind will readily be convinced that such a great soul is fit to be worshipped and revered.

Guru is the Moksha-Dvara. He is the gateway to the transcendental Truth-Consciousness. But, it is the aspirant that has to enter through it. The Guru is a help. But the actual task of practical Sadhana falls on the aspirant himself.

THE NEED FOR A GURU

For a beginner in the spiritual path, a Guru is necessary. To light a candle, you need a burning candle. Even so, an illumined soul alone can enlighten another soul.

Some do meditation for some years independently. Later on, they actually feel the necessity for a Guru. They come across some obstacles in the way. They do not know how to obviate these impediments or stumbling blocks. Then they begin to search for a Master.

Only the man who has already been to Badrinath will be able to tell you the road leading to it. In the case of the spiritual path, it is still more difficult to find your

way. The mind will mislead you very often. The Guru will be able to remove pitfalls and obstacles, and lead you along the right path. He will tell you: "This road leads you to Moksha; this one leads to bondage." Without this guidance, you might want to go to Badrinath, but find yourself in Delhi!

The scriptures are like a forest. There are ambiguous passages. There are passages that are apparently contradictory and others that have esoteric meanings, diverse significance and hidden explanations. There are cross references. You are in need of a Guru or Preceptor who will explain to you the right meaning, who will remove doubts and ambiguities, who will place before you the essence of the teachings.

A Guru is absolutely necessary for every aspirant in the spiritual path. It is only the Guru who will find out your defects. The nature of egoism is such that you will not be able to find out your own defects. Just as a man cannot see his back, so also he cannot see his own errors. He must live under a Guru for the eradication of his evil qualities and defects.

The aspirant who is under the guidance of a Master or Guru is safe from being led astray. Satsanga or association with the Guru is an armour and fortress to guard you against all temptations and unfavorable forces of the material world.

Cases of those who had attained perfection without study under any Guru should not be cited as authoritative against the necessity for a Guru; for, such great men are the anomalies of spiritual life, and not the common normality. They come into existence as spiritual masters as a result of the intense service, study and meditation practiced in previous births. They had already studied under the Guru. The present birth is only its continuative spiritual effect. Hence, the importance of the Guru is not lessened thereby.

Some teachers mislead their aspirants. They say to all. "Think for yourself. Do not surrender yourself to any Guru." When one says, "Do not follow any Gurus," he intends to be the listeners' Guru himself. Do not approach such pseudo-Gurus. Do not hear their lectures.

All great ones had their teachers. All the sages, saints, prophets, world teachers, incarnations, great men have had their own Gurus, however great they might have been. Svetaketu learnt the nature of Truth from Uddalaka, Maitreyi from Yajnavalkya, Bhrigu from Varuna, Narada from Sanatkumara, Nachiketas from Yama, Indra from Prajapati; and several others humbly went to wise ones, observed strict Brahmacharya, practiced rigorous discipline, and learnt Brahma-Vidya from them.

Lord Krishna sat at the feet of His Guru Sandipani. Lord Rama had Guru Vasishta who gave Him Upadesa. Lord Jesus sought John to be baptised by him on the banks of the river Jordan. Even Devas have Brihaspati

as their Guru. Even the greatest among the divine beings sat at the feet of Guru Dakshinamurti.

A neophyte must have a personal Guru first. He cannot have God as Guru to begin with. He must have a pure mind. He must have ethical perfection. He must be intensely virtuous. He must be above body-consciousness. Then alone can he have God as Guru.

CHOOSING THE GURU

If you find peace in the presence of a Mahatma, if you are inspired by his speeches, if he is able to clear your doubts, if he is free from greed, anger and lust, if he is selfless, loving and I-less, you can take him as your Guru. He who is able to clear your doubts, he who is sympathetic in your Sadhana, he who does not disturb your beliefs but helps you on from where you are, he in whose very presence you feel spiritually elevated—he is your Guru. Once you choose your Guru, implicitly follow him. God will guide you through the Guru.

Do not use your reason too much in the selection of your Guru. You will fail if you do so. If you fail to get a first-class Guru, try to follow the instructions of the Sadhu who is treading the path for some years, who has purity and other virtuous qualities, and who has some knowledge of the scriptures. Just as a student of the Intermediate Class will be able to teach a student of Third Form when a professor with M.A. Qualification is not available, just as a sub-assistant surgeon will be able to attend on a patient when the civil surgeon is not

available, this second-class type of Guru will be able to help you.

If you are not able to find out even this second-class type of Guru, you can follow the teachings contained in the books written by realized saints like Sri Sankara, Dattatreya and others. You can keep a photo of such a realized Guru, if available, and worship the same with faith and devotion. Gradually you will get inspiration, and the Guru may appear in a dream and initiate and inspire you at the proper time. For a sincere Sadhaka, help comes in a mysterious manner.

MYSTERIOUS HELP FROM THE LORD

Just see how the Lord helped the devotees in the following instances. Ekanath heard an Akasa-Vani, a voice from the sky. It said, "See Janardhan Pant at Devi Giri. He will put you in the proper path and guide you." He acted accordingly and found his Guru. Tukaram received his Mantra "Rama Krishna Hari" in his dream. He repeated this Mantra and had Darshan of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna directed Namadev to get his higher initiation from a Sannyasin at Mallikarjuna. Queen Chudalai assumed the form of Kumbha Muni, appeared before her husband Sikidhvaja in the forest, and initiated him into the mysteries of Kaivalya. Madhura Kavi saw a light in the firmament for three days consecutively. It guided him and took him to his Guru Nammalvar who was sitting in his Samadhi underneath a tamarind tree near Tinnevely.

Bilvamangal was very much attracted to Chintamani, the dancing woman. The latter became his Guru. Tulasidas received instructions from an invisible being to see Hanuman and, through Hanuman, to get Darshan of Sri Rama.

Competent disciples are never in want of a competent Guru. Realised souls are not rare. Ordinary ignorant-minded persons cannot easily recognise them. Only a few persons, who are pure and embodiments of all virtuous qualities, can understand realized souls, and they alone will be benefited in their company.

So long as there is a world, there are Gurus and Vedas to guide the struggling souls in the path of Self-realisation. The number of realized souls may be less in the Iron Age when compared with the Satya Yuga, but they are always present to help according to his capacity, temperament and understanding. His Satguru will meet him along that path.

SIKSHA GURUS AND DIKSHA GURUS

Man has a twofold duty here on earth—to preserve his life, and to realize his Self. To preserve his life, he has to learn to work for his daily bread. To realize his Self, he has to serve, love and meditate. The Guru who teaches him the knowledge of worldly arts is the Siksha Guru. The Guru who shows him the path of Realisation is the Diksha Guru. Siksha Gurus can be many—as many as the things he wishes to learn. Diksha Guru can be only one—the one who leads him to Moksha.

STICK TO ONE GURU

From a doctor, you get a prescription. From two doctors, you get consultation. From three doctors, you get your own cremation. Even so, if you have many Gurus, you will be bewildered. You will be at a loss to know what to do. One Guru will tell you: "Do Soham Japa." Another will tell you: "Do Japa of Sri Ram." A third Guru will tell you: "Hear Anahata sounds." You will be puzzled. Stick to one Guru and follow his instructions.

Listen to all, but follow one. Respect all, but adore one. Gather knowledge from all, but adopt the teachings of one Master. Then you will have rapid spiritual progress.

GURU-PARAMPARA

Spiritual knowledge is a matter of Guru-Parampara. It is handed down from Guru to his disciple. Gaudapadacharya imparted Self-knowledge to his disciple Govindacharya; Govindacharya to his disciple Sankaracharya; Sankaracharya to his disciple Suresvaracharya; Matesyendranath imparted knowledge to his disciple Gorakhnath; Gorakhnath to Nivrittinath; Nivrittinath to Jnanadeva. Totapuri imparted knowledge to Sri Ramakrishna, and Ramakrishna to Swami Vivekananda. It was Ashtavakra who moulded the life of Raja Janaka. It was Gorakhnath who shaped the spiritual destiny of Raja Bhartrihari. It

was Lord Krishna who made Arjuna and Uddhava get themselves established in the spiritual path when their minds were in an unsettled state.

INITIATION—ITS MEANING

A Bhakta will be initiated by a Bhakta saint in the path of devotion. A Jnani will initiate a student of Vedanta in the Mahavakyas. A Hatha Yogi or Raja Yogi can initiate another in his particular path. But, a sage of perfect Realisation, a Purna Jnani or Purna Yogi, can give initiation in any particular path. A sage or saint like Sri Sankara or Madhusudhana Sarasvati can initiate a Sadhaka, in any particular path for which the aspirant is fit. The Guru will find out by close study of the aspirant his tastes, temperaments and capacity, and decide for him the most suitable path. If his heart is impure, the teacher will prescribe selfless service for a number of years. Then the Guru will find out for what particular path the student is fit and initiate him in that.

Initiation does not mean reciting a Mantra into another's ears. If Rama is influenced by the thoughts of Krishna, the former has got initiation already from the latter. If an aspirant treads the path of truth after studying the books written by a saint, and imbibes his teachings, that saint has already become his Guru.

SAKTI-SANCHARA

Just as you give an orange to a man, so also, spiritual power can be transmitted by one to another.

This method of transmitting spiritual powers is termed Sakti-Sanchara. In Sakti-Sanchara, a certain spiritual vibration of the Satguru is actually transferred to the mind of the disciple.

Spiritual power is transmitted by the Guru to the proper disciple whom he considers fit for Sakti-Sanchara. The Guru can transform the disciple by a look, a touch, a thought, or a word or willing. Sakti-Sanchara comes through Parampara. It is a hidden mystic science. It is handed down from the Guru to the disciple.

Lord Jesus, through touch, transmitted his spiritual power to some of his disciples. A disciple of Samartha Ramdas transmitted his power to that dancing girl's daughter who was very passionate towards him. This disciple gazed at her and gave her Samadhi. Her passion vanished. She became very religious and spiritual. Lord Krishna touched the blind eyes of Suradas. The inner eye of Suradas was opened. He had Bhava-Samadhi. Lord Gauranga, through his touch, produced divine intoxication in many people and converted them to his side. Atheists even danced in ecstasy in the streets by his touch and sang songs of Hari.

The disciple should not rest satisfied with the transmission of power from the Guru. He will have to struggle hard in Sadhana for further perfection and attainments. Sri Ramakrishna Parmahansa touched Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda had super

conscious experience. He struggled hard for seven years more, even after the touch, for attaining perfection.

GRACE AND SELF-EFFORT

Realisation cannot come to you as a miracle done by your Guru. Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus, Ramatirtha have all done Sadhana. Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to develop Vairagya and Abhyasa. He did not say to him, "I will give you Mukti now." Therefore, abandon the wrong notion that your Guru will give you Samadhi and Mukti. Strive, purify, meditate and realize.

Guru-Kripa, grace of the Guru, is very necessary. That does not mean that the disciple should sit idle. He must do rigid Purushartha, spiritual practices. The whole work must be done by the student. Nowadays, people want a drop of water from the Kamandalu of a Sannyasin and desire to enter into Samadhi immediately. They are not prepared to undergo any Sadhana for purification and Self-realisation. They want a magic pill to push them into Samadhi. If you have got such delusion, give it up immediately.

Guru and Sastras can show you the path and remove your doubts. Anubhava of Aparoksha kind or direct intuitive knowledge is left for your own experience. A hungry man will have to eat for himself. He who has a severe itching will have to scratch for himself.

No doubt, Guru's blessings can do everything. How can one have his blessings? By pleasing the Guru. A Guru can be pleased with his disciple only if the latter carries out his spiritual instructions implicitly. Carefully follow, therefore, the instructions of the Guru. Act up to his instructions. Then only will you deserve his blessings, and then alone his blessings can do everything.

Chapter Two

DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF DISCIPLESHIP

*Yasya deve para bhaktir-yatha deve tatha gurau;
Tasyaite kathita hyarthah prakashante mahatmanah.*

He whose devotion to the Lord is great, and who has as much devotion to the Guru as to the Lord, unto him, that high-souled one, meanings of the sacred texts stand revealed (Svetasvatara Upanishad).

A disciple is he who follows the instructions of the Guru to the letter and spirit, who propagates the teachings of the Guru to less evolved souls in the path till the end of his life.

A true disciple is concerned only with the Divine Nature of the Guru. The Guru's action as man is not the disciple's concern. He is totally oblivious of it. To him, the Guru is Guru even if he acts unconventionally. Always remember that the nature of a saint is unfathomable. Judge him not. Measure not his divine nature with the inadequate yardstick of your ignorance. Criticise not your Guru's action which is done on universal vision.

True discipleship opens the vision. It kindles the Spiritual fire. It awakens the dormant faculties. It is

most necessary in one's journey along the spiritual path. Guru and disciple become one. Guru blesses guides and inspires the disciple. He transmits, transforms and spiritualizes him.

WHO IS QUALIFIED TO APPROACH THE GURU?

To approach a Guru, you must be a proper Adhikari. Correct understanding, non-attachment to worldly objects, serenity of mind, restraint of the senses, absence of base passions, faith in the Guru and devotion to God are necessary equipment with which the aspirant has to approach the Guru.

The Guru will impart spiritual instructions only to that aspirant who thirsts for liberation, who duly obeys the injunctions of the Sastras, who has subdued his passions and senses, who has a calm mind, and who possesses virtuous qualities like mercy, cosmic love, patience, humility, endurance, forbearance, etc. Initiation into the mysteries of Brahman will fructify only when the disciple's mind becomes desireless, and will produce Jnana in it.

GURU-SEVA

Aspirants should direct their whole attention in the beginning towards removal of selfishness by protracted service of Guru. Serve your Guru with divine bhava. The cancer of individuality will be dissolved.

The captain of a ship is ever alert. A fisherman is ever alert. A surgeon in the operation theatre is ever alert. Even so, a thirsting hungry disciple should be ever alert in the service of his Guru.

Live to serve the Guru. You must watch for opportunities. Do not wait for invitation. Volunteer yourself for the Guru's service.

Serve your Guru humbly, willingly, unquestioningly, unassumingly, ungrudgingly, untiringly and lovingly. The more you spend your energy in serving your Guru, the more divine energy will flow into you.

He who serves the Guru serves the whole world. Serve the Guru without selfish ends. Scrutinize your inner motives while doing service to Guru. Service must be done to Guru without expectation of name, fame, power, wealth, etc.

OBEDIENCE TO GURU

Obedience to Guru is better than reverence. Obedience is a precious virtue, because if you try to develop the virtue of obedience, the ego, the arch-enemy on the path of Self-realisation, slowly gets rooted out.

Only the disciple who obeys his Guru can have command over his lower self. Obedience should be very practical, wholehearted and actively persevering. True Obedience to Guru neither procrastinates nor questions.

A hypocritical disciple obeys his Guru from fear. The true disciple obeys his Guru with pure love for love's sake.

Learn how to obey. Then alone you can command. Learn how to be a disciple. Then alone you can become a Guru.

Give up the delusive notion that to submit to the preceptor, to obey him, and to carry out his instructions is slavish mentality. The ignorant man thinks that it is beneath his dignity and against his freedom to submit to another man's command. This is a grave blunder. If you reflect carefully, you will see that your individual freedom is, in reality, an absolutely an abject slavery to your own ego and vanity. It is the vagaries of the sensual mind. He who attains victory over the mind and the ego is the truly free man. He is the hero. It is to attain victory that man submits to the higher spiritualised personality of the Guru. By this submission, he vanquishes his lower ego and realizes the bliss of Infinite Consciousness.

HAPPY-GO-LUCKY DISCIPLES

The spiritual path is not like writing a thesis for the Master of Arts Degree. It is quite a different line altogether. The help of a teacher is necessary at every moment. Young aspirants become self-sufficient, arrogant and self-assertive in these days. They do not care to carry out the orders of a Guru. They do not wish to have a Guru. They want independence from the very

beginning. They think they are in the Turiya Avastha when they do not know even the ABC of spirituality or truth. They mistake licentiousness or "having their own ways and sweet will" as freedom. This is a serious, lamentable mistake. That is the reason why they do not grow. They lose the faith in the efficacy of Sadhana and in the existence of God. They wander about in a happy-go-lucky manner, without any aim, from Kashmir to Gangotri, and from Gangotri to Ramesvaram, talking some nonsense on the way, something from Vichara-Sagara, something from Panchadasi, and posing as Jivanmuktas.

SURRENDER AND GRACE

If you want to drink water at the tap, you will have to bend yourself. Even so, if you want to drink the spiritual nectar of immortality which flows from the holy lips of the Guru, you will have to be an embodiment of humility and meekness.

The lower nature of the mind must be thoroughly regenerated. The aspirant says to his preceptor: "I want to practice Yoga. I want to enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. I want to sit at your feet. I have surrendered myself to you." But, he does not want to change his lower nature and habits, old character, behavior and conduct.

One's individual ego, preconceived notions, pet ideas and prejudices, and selfish interests should be

given up. All these stand in the way of carrying out the teachings and instructions of one's Guru.

Lay bare to your Guru the secrets of your heart. The more you do so, the greater the sympathy, which means an accession of strength to you in the struggle against sin and temptation.

The aspirant, before he desires the grace of the Master, should deserve it. The supply of divine grace comes only when there is a real thirst in the aspirant, and when he is fit to receive it.

Guru's grace descends upon those who feel utterly humble and faithful to him. Faith is confidence and trust in Guru. Faith is firm conviction of the truth of what is declared by the preceptor by way either of testimony or authority without any other evidence or proof. The disciple who has faith in the Guru argues not, thinks not, reasons not and cogitates not. He simply obeys.

The disciple's self-surrender to Guru and Guru's grace are interrelated. Surrender draws down Guru's grace and grace of Guru makes the surrender complete. Guru's grace works in the form of Sadhana in the aspirant. If an aspirant sticks to the path tenaciously, this is the grace of the Guru. If he resists when temptation assails him, this is the grace of the Guru. If people receive him with love and reverence, this is the grace of the Guru. If he gets encouragement and strength when he is in despair and despondency, this is the grace of the Guru. If he gets over the body-consciousness and rests

.....

in his own Ananda Svarupa, this is the grace of the Guru. Feel his grace at every step, and be sincere and truthful to him.

HOW THE GURU TEACHES

The Guru teaches through personal example. The day-to-day conduct of the Guru is a living ideal to the disciple who is observant. The life of the Guru is a living sermon to the sincere disciple. By constant contact, the disciple imbibes the virtues of his Guru. He is moulded gradually. Study Chhandogya Upanishad. You will find that Indra stayed with Prajapati for a period of a hundred and one years and served him wholeheartedly.

The Guru only knows the spiritual needs of his disciples. He will give Upadesa according to the disciple's temperament and evolution. This Upadesa should be kept a secret. Discussion among disciples will lead to criticism of Guru and slackness in Sadhana. There will be no spiritual progress. Follow the Guru's Upadesa to the very letter. Remember it is meant for you only. The other disciples have received Guru-Upadesa, too. Let them follow it. Do not impose the Upadesa you have received on others.

The student can imbibe or draw from his teacher in proportion to his degree of faith. When the Guru comes to the aspirant to give spiritual instructions, if he is self-sufficient and heedless, if he bolts the door of his heart, he is not benefited.

GURU'S TESTS

The Satguru communicates the secret knowledge of the Upanishads to his trusted disciples only after repeated entreaty and severe testing. Sometimes the Guru may even tempt his disciple, but the latter should overcome by firm faith in the Guru.

In days of yore, the tests were very severe. Once Gorakhnath asked some of his students to climb up a tall tree and throw themselves, head downwards, on a very sharp trident or Trisula. Many faithless students kept quiet. But one faithful student at once climbed up the tree with lightning speed and hurled himself downwards. He was protected by the invisible hand of Gorakhnath. He had immediate Self-realisation.

Once Guru Govind Singh tested his students. He said: "My dear disciples! If you have real devotion towards me, let six of you come forward and give me your heads. Then we can have success in our attempt." Two faithful disciples offered their heads.

Guru Govind Singh took them inside the camp and cut off the heads of two goats instead.

The Guru tests the students in various ways. Some students misunderstand him and lose their faith in him. Hence they are not benefited.

FOUR CLASSES OF DISCIPLES

The best disciple is like petrol or aviation spirit. Even from a great distance, he will instantly react to the spark of the Guru's Upadesa.

The second class disciple is like camphor. A touch awakens his inner spirit and kindles the fire of spirituality in him.

The third class of disciple is like coal. The Guru has to take great pains in order to awaken the spirit in him.

The fourth class of disciple is like a plantain stem. No efforts will have any effect on him. Whatever the Guru may do, he remains cold and inert.

Two things are necessary for a beautifully finished idol or image. One is a perfect, faultless, good piece of marble; the second is the expert sculptor. The piece of marble should but unconditionally remain in the hands of the sculptor in order to be carved and chiseled into the fine image. So too, the disciple has but to cleanse himself, purify himself, and make himself a perfectly faultless piece of marble, and placing himself under the expert guidance of his Master, allow to be carved and chiseled into the Image of God.

Chapter Three

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOLY GURU-PURNIMA DAY

*Sankaram sankaracharyam kesavam badarayanam;
Sutra-bhashya-kritau vande bhagavantau punah punah.*

I adore Lord Siva, Lord Vishnu, Bhagawan Vyasa and Sri Sankaracharya. I again and again prostrate to Sri Vyasa who wrote the Vedanta Sutras and to Sri Sankaracharya who wrote the commentaries thereon (*Guru Vandanam*).

The full-moon day in the month of Ashadha is the extremely auspicious and holy day of Guru-Purnima. On this Ashadha Purnima Day, sacred to the memory of the great sage Sri Vyasa Bhagawan or Sri Krishna Dvaipayana, Sannyasins settle at some place to study, do Vedantic Vichara, and discourse on the thrice-blessed Brahma Sutras composed by Maharshi Vyasa. Sri Veda-Vyasa has done unforgettable service to all humanity for all time by editing the four Vedas, writing the eighteen Puranas, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata. We can attempt to repay this deep debt of gratitude we owe him only by constant study of his works and practice of his teachings imparted for the regeneration of humanity in the Iron Age or Kali Yuga. In honour of this divine personage, all Sadhakas and

devotees perform Vyasa Puja on this day; aspirants worship their Guru. Mahatmas and Sadhus are honoured and entertained, and acts of charity done by all Grihasthas with deep faith and sincerity. Chaturmasa for Sannyasins begins from this day. Sannyasins stay in one place during the rainy season for four months, study the Brahma Sutras, and practice meditation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GURU-PURNIMA DAY

Mark fully the deep significance of this great day. Ashadha Purnima heralds the Chaturmasa, or the setting in of the eagerly awaited rains. The water, drawn up and stored as clouds in the hot summer, now manifests in plentiful showers that usher in the advent of fresh life everywhere. Even so do you all begin seriously to put into actual working all the theory and philosophy that you have stored up in you through patient study. Commence practical spiritual Sadhana right from this day. Generate fresh waves of spirituality. Let all that you have read, heard, seen and learnt become, through Sadhana, transformed into a continuous outpouring of universal prayer and worship of the Lord seated in all beings.

Live on milk and fruits on this day and practice rigorous Japa and Dhyana. Study the Brahma Sutras and do some lakhs of Japa (Anushthana or Purascharana) of your Guru Mantra or Ishta Mantra, during the Chaturmasa. You will be highly benefitted.

As the day of Guru-Puja or worship of one's preceptor this is a day of pure joy to the sincere aspirant. Thrilled by the expectation of offering his reverent homage to the beloved Guru, aspirant awaits this occasion with eagerness and devotion. It is the Guru alone that breaks the binding cords of attachment and releases the aspirant from the trammels of earthly existence. The Sruti says: "To that high-souled aspirant, whose devotion to his Guru is as great as that to the Lord, these secrets explained, become illuminated." Guru is Brahman or Isvara Himself. He guides and inspires you from the innermost core of your being. He is everywhere.

BEHOLD THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE AS GURU-SVARUPA

Have a new angle of vision. Behold the entire universe as Guru-Svarupa. See the guiding hand, the awakening voice, the illumining touch of the Guru in every object in the Creation. The whole world will now stand transformed before your changed vision. The Virat Guru will reveal all the precious secrets of life and bestow wisdom. The Supreme Guru, manifest in visible Nature, will teach you the most valuable lessons of life. Worship daily this Guru of Gurus, the Guru who taught even Avadhuta Dattatreya. The silent all-enduring earth with its lofty forbearance, the shady fruit-bearing tree with its willing self-sacrifice, the mighty Banyan tree (Pipal) reposing with patience in the tiny seed, the

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dripping drops whose persistence wears away the rocks, the planets and the seasons with their orderly punctuality and regularity are divine Gurus to him who will look, listen and receive.

PURIFY AND PROGRESS

Become a personification of receptivity. Empty yourself of your petty ego-sense. All the treasure locked up in the bosom of Nature will become yours! You will have progress and perfection in an amazingly short time. Become pure and unattached as the mountain breeze. As the river flows continuously, steadily and constantly towards its goal, the ocean, by moving every movement of your life towards the Supreme State of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, let all your thoughts, all your words, all your actions be directed only towards the Goal.

The moon shines by reflecting the dazzling light of the sun. It is the full-moon of Purnima-Day that reflects in full splendor the glorious light of the sun. It glorifies the sun. Purify yourself through the fire of service and Sadhana, and like the full moon, reflect the glorious Light of the Atman. Become the full reflectors of Brahmic splendor, the Light of lights. Make this your goal, to become a living witness to Divinity, the brilliant Sun of suns!

TAT TVAM ASI

Brahman or the Supreme Self alone is real. He is the Soul of all. He is All in all. He is the Essence of this universe. He is the Unity that never admits of a duality under all the varieties and diversities of nature. Thou art this immortal, all-pervading, all-blissful Brahman. Thou art That—*Tat Tvam Asi*. Realise this and be free.

Remember the four important verses of the Brahma Sutras: (I) *Atha-ato Brahma-Jijnas*—Now, therefore, the enquiry into Brahman. (II) *Janmadyasya Yatah*—From which proceed the origin, etc. (III) *Sastra-Yonitvat*—The scriptures being the means of right knowledge. (iv) *Tat Tu Samanvayat*—But that because It is the main support.

Now sing: *Jaya Guru Siva Guru Hari Guru Ram,
Jagad-Guru Param Guru Sat-Guru Syam.*

Remember and adore Sri Vyasa and the Brahma-Vidya Gurus. May their blessings be upon you all! May you all cut asunder the knot of *avidya* and shine as blessed Jivamnuktas, shedding peace, joy and light everywhere!

Chapter Four

MAHARSHI VYASA AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO HINDU SCRIPTURE

Namostu-te vyasa visala-buddhe

Phullaravindayatapatra-netra;

Yena tvaya bharata-taila-purnah

Prajvalito jnanamayah pradipah

Salutations unto thee, O Vyasa of broad intellect and with eyes large like the petals of full-blown lotuses, by whom the lamp of Knowledge, filled with the oil of the Mahabharata, has been lighted (Gita Dhyanam).

In ancient time, our forefathers, the Rishis of Aryavarta, went to the forest to do Tapasya during the four months following Vyasa Purnima—a particular and important day in the Hindu calendar. On this memorable day, Vyasa, an incarnation of the Lord Himself, began to write his Brahma Sutras. Our ancient Rishis did this *tapasya* in caves and forests. But times have changed and such facilities are not common nowadays, although Grihasthas and *rajas* are not wanting, who are able and willing to place at the disposal of the members of the fourth Ashrama such help and facilities as they could afford. The forests and caves have given place to the

rooms in their own Gurudvaras and Mutts. One has, of necessity, to suit himself to places and times; and change of place and situation should not be allowed to make such a difference in our mental attitudes. Chaturmasa begins from Vyasa Purnima Day when we are, according to our Sastras, expected to worship Vyasa and the Brahma-Vidya Gurus and begin the study of the Brahma Sutras and other ancient books on 'wisdom'.

THE BIRTH OF KRISHNA DVAIPAYANA

Our mythology speaks of many Vyasas; and it is said that there had been twenty-eight Vyasas before the present Vyasa—Krishna Dvaipayana—took his birth at the end of Dvapara Yuga. He was born of Parasara Rishi through the Matsya-Kanya—Satyavati Devi—under some peculiar and wonderful circumstances. Parasara was a great Jnani and one of the supreme authorities on astrology and his book 'Parasara Hora' is still a textbook on astrology. He has also written a Smriti known as Parasara Smriti which is held in such high esteem that it is quoted by our present-day writers on sociology and ethics. Parasara came to know that a child, conceived at a particular moment of time or Ghatika, would be born as the greatest man of the age, nay, as an Amsa of Lord Vishnu Himself. On that day, Parasara was travelling in a boat and he spoke to the boatman about the nearing of this auspicious time. The boatman had a daughter who was of age and awaiting marriage. He was impressed with the sancity and greatness of the Rishi and offered

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his daughter in marriage to Parasara. Our Vyasa was born of this union and his birth is said to be due to the blessing of Lord Siva Himself who blessed the union of a sage with a Jnani of the highest order, although of a low caste.

HIS STUPENDOUS CONTRIBUTION TO HINDU SCRIPTURE

At a very tender age, Vyasa gave out to his parents the secret of his life that he should go to the forest and do Akhanda Tapas. His mother at first did not agree, but later gave permission on one important condition that he should appear before her whenever she wished for his presence. This itself shows how farsighted the parents and the son were. Puranas say that Vyasa took initiation at the hands of his twenty-first Guru, sage Vasudeva. He studied the Sastras under the sages Sanaka and Sanandana and others. He arranged the Vedas for the good of mankind, and wrote the Brahma Sutras for the quick and easy understanding of the Srutis; he also wrote the Mahabharata to enable women, Sudras, and other people of lesser intellect to understand the highest knowledge in the most easy way. He wrote the eighteen Puranas and established the system of teaching them through Upakhyanas or discourses. In this way, he established the three paths, viz., Karma, Upasana and Jnana. To him is also attributed the fact that he continued the line of his mother, and that Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidura were his progenies. His last work was

the Bhagavata which he undertook at the instigation of Devarshi Narada who once came to him and advised him to write it, as without it, his goal in life would not be reached.

Vyasa is considered by all Hindus as a Chiranjivi, one who is still living and roaming throughout the world for the well-being of his devotees and appears to the true and the faithful. It is said that Jagadguru Sankaracharya had his Darsana in the house of sage Mandanamisra, and that he appeared to many others as well. Thus, in short, he lives for the welfare of the world. Let us pray for his blessings on us all and on the whole world.

THE BRAHMA SUTRAS AND ITS DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS

Everybody knows that there are six important systems of thought developed by our ancient known as the Shad-Darsanas or the Six Orthodox Schools of Philosophy, viz., Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta. In each system there is a different shade of opinion. Later, these thoughts became unwieldy, and to regulate them the Sutras came into existence. Treatises were written in short aphorisms called Sutras in Sanskrit, meaning, clues for memory or aid to long discussions on every topic. In the Padma Purana, the definition of a Sutra is given, which says that the Sutra should be concise and unambiguous; but the brevity was carried to such an extent that the Sutra has become unintelligible and

particularly so with respect to the Brahma Sutras. Today we find the same Sutra being interpreted in a dozen ways. The Brahma Sutras written by Vyasa or Badarayana—for that was the name which he possessed in addition—are also known as Vedanta Sutras as they deal with Vedanta only. They are divided into four chapters, each being subdivided again into four sections. It is interesting to note that they begin and end with Sutras which read together mean, “the inquirer into the real nature of Brahman has no return,” meaning that “going by that way one reaches Immortality,” and that “they no more return to the world.” About the authorship of these Sutras, tradition attributes it to Vyasa. Sankaracharya, in his Bhashya, refers to Vyasa as the author of the Gita and Mahabharata, and to Badarayana as the author of the Brahma Sutras. His followers—Vachaspati, Anandagiri and others—identify the two as one and the same person, while Ramanuja and others attribute the authorship to Vyasa himself. The oldest commentary on the Brahma Sutras is by Sankaracharya; he was later followed by Ramanuja, Vallabha, Nimbarka, Madhva and others who established their own schools of thought. The chief of them who are five in number, as mentioned above, mostly agree on these two points, viz., (1) that Brahman is the cause of this world and (2) that knowledge of Brahman leads to final emancipation. But they differ amongst themselves on the nature of this Brahman, the relation between the individual soul and the Supreme

Soul, and the condition of the soul in the state of release. According to some, Bhakti, and not Jnana as interpreted by Sankara, is the chief means of attaining Liberation.

Vyasa's life is a unique example of one born for the dissemination of spiritual knowledge. His writings still inspire us and the whole world, even to this day. May we all live in the spirit of his writings!

Chapter Five

SRI DAKSHINAMURTI

*Nidhaye sarva-vidyanam bhishaje bhava-roginam;
Gurave sarva-lokanam dakshinamurtaye namah.*

Salutations to Dakshinamurti, the Abode of all learning, the Physician to all those afflicted with the disease of worldly existence, the Teacher of all (*Guru Gita*).

On the Mount Kailas, with Parvati Devi by His side, Lord Siva was sitting in a hall beautifully decorated by precious stones. At that time, Devi worshipped the Lord and requested Him to alter the name of Dakshayani given to her before for being the daughter of Daksha. This Daksha was killed by Lord Siva for his disrespect and arrogance. On hearing this request, Lord Siva ordained that Devi should be born as the daughter of Parvata Raja who was doing rigorous Tapas for getting a child. He also told Parvati that He would come over to her and marry her. Thus ordained, Parvati Devi was born as the child of Parvata Raja, and since her fifth year, began to do rigorous Tapas for being the bride of Lord Siva.

During the absence of Devi, when Lord Siva was alone, the sons of Brahma Deva—who are sages Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara—came

to have Darshan of Lord Siva and prostrated before Him. They entreated the Lord to teach them the way to remove Avidya and attain Salvation. They expressed that in spite of the vast study of scriptures, they had no internal peace, and they were in need of learning the inner secrets by knowing which they could attain Salvation.

Lord Siva, hearing this appeal made by the sages, assumed the form of Dakshinamurti, and remaining as the Guru Supreme, began to teach them the inner secrets by keeping Mauna and showing the Chinmudra by His Hand. The sages began to meditate on the lines shown by the Lord and attained the state of inexpressible and illimitable joy.

Thus Lord Siva came to be known as Dakshinamurti. May the blessings of Lord Dakshinamurti be upon us all. May you all dive deep and enjoy the everlasting Peace and Bliss through His Grace. Om Santih Santih Santih!

Chapter Six

LORD DATTATREYA AND HIS TWENTY-FOUR GURUS

*Adau brahma madhye vishnur-ante devah sadasivah;
Murtitraya-svarpaya dattatreya namostu-te.*

Salutations to Lord Dattatreya who is of the form of the Tri-Murtis, who is Brahma at the beginning, Vishnu at the middle and Sadasiva at the end.

*Brahmajnanamayi Mudra Vastre Chakasabhutale;
Prajnanaghanabodhaya Dattatreya Namostu-Te.*

Salutations, again and again, to the Lord of Girnar Hills whose Mudra is Brahma-Jnana, whose garments are the sky and the earth, who is verily an embodiment of dense Consciousness-Knowledge
(*Sri Sankaracharya*).

Anasuya is generally quoted as the model of chastity and she was the wife of Atri Maharshi, a great sage and one of the Sapta Rishis. She was well established in Pativrata Dharma. She served her husband with intense devotion. She did severe Tapas for a very long time in order to beget sons equal to Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

Once, Narada took a small ball of iron—the size of a gram grain—to Sarasvati and said to her: "O Sarasvati

Devi! Please fry this iron-ball. I will eat this iron-ball-gram during my travel." Sarasvati laughed and said: "O Rishi Narada! How can this iron-ball be fried? How can this be eaten?" Narada afterwards went to Mahalakshmi and Parvati, and requested them to fry the iron-ball. They also laughed at Narada Rishi. Then Narada said: "O Devis! See, I will get it fried by Anusuya, wife of Atri Maharshi, a great Pativrata who lives in the earth-plane."

Then Narada came to Anasuya and requested her to fry the iron-ball-gram. Anasuya put the iron-ball in the frying pan, meditated on the form of her husband, and put a few drops of water which were used in washing the feet of her husband, on the iron-ball. The iron-ball was at once fried. Narada went to Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Parvati, ate before them the fried iron-ball gram, and gave them also a little of it. He greatly praised the glory of Anusuya and her chastity. Then Narada resolved to fulfil the wish of Anusuya in her begetting sons equal to Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

He said to Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Parvati: "You also could have fried the iron-ball, if you all had done service to your husbands with faith, sincerity and devotion. Make a request to your husbands to test Anasuya's Pativrata Dharma."

Then Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Parvati requested their husbands to test the Pativrata Dharma of Anasuya, wife of Atri Maharshi, and ask her to give them Nirvana Bhiksha, i.e., giving alms in a naked condition.

The Tri-Murtis came to know through Jnana-Drishti of the action of Narada, and the Tapas and the wish of Anasuya. They agreed. The Tri-Murtis put on the garb of Sannyasins, appeared before Anasuya, and asked her to give them Nirvana Bhiksha. Anasuya was in a great dilemma. She could not say 'No' to the Bhikshus. She had to maintain her Pativrata Dharma also. She meditated on the form of her husband, took refuge in his feet, and sprinkled over the three Sannyasins a few drops of water which were used for washing the feet of her husband. The Tri-Murtis were converted into three children on account of the glory of the Charanamrita water. At the same time, there was accumulation of milk in the breasts of Anasuya. She thought that these children were her own children and fed them with the milk in a nude state and put them to the cradle. She was eagerly expecting the arrival of her husband who had gone for taking his bath.

As soon as Atri Rishi came back home, Anasuya related to her husband all that had happened during his absence, placed the three children at his feet, and worshipped him. But Atri knew all this already through his divine vision. He embraced all the three children. The three children became one child with two feet, one trunk, three heads and six hands. Atri Rishi blessed his wife and informed her that the Tri-Murtis themselves had assumed the forms of the children to gratify her wish.

Narada went to Brahma-Loka, Vaikuntha and Kailasa and informed Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Parvati that their husbands had been turned into children through the power of Pativrata Dharma of Anasuya when they asked her Nirvana Bhiksha, and that they would not return unless the Devis asked for Bhartri Bhiksha (Bhiksha of husband) from Atri. Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Parvati assumed the forms of ordinary women, appeared before Atri and asked for Pati Bhiksha: "O Rishi, kindly give us back our husbands." Atri Rishi duly honoured the three ladies and with folded hands prayed to them that his wish and the wish of Anasuya should be fulfilled. Then the Tri-Murtis appeared in their true form before Atri and said: "This child will be a great sage according to the wish of Anasuya. The child will bear the name of Dattatreya." Then they disappeared.

Dattatreya attained manhood. As he had the rays of the Tri-Murtis, and as he was a great Jnani, all Rishis and ascetics worshipped him. He was gentle, peaceful and amiable. He was always followed by a great multitude of people. Dattatreya tried to get rid of them, but his endeavours were all in vain. Once, when he was surrounded by many people, he entered a river for bathing and he did not come out of it for three days. He entered into Samadhi inside the water. On the third day, he came out, and found that the people that the people were still sitting on the banks of the river awaiting his return.

He did not succeed in getting rid of the people by this method. He adopted another plan. He created a beautiful girl and a bottle of wine out of his Yogic power. He came out of the waters holding the girl in one hand and the bottle of wine in the other. The people thought that Dattatreya had fallen from his Yoga and so they left him and went away.

Dattatreya threw away all his personal possessions, even the scanty clothing he had, and became an Avadhuta. He went out preaching and teaching the truths of Vedanta. Dattatreya taught his Gita named Avadhuta Gita to Lord Subrahmanya or Kartikeya. This is a most valuable book which contains the truths and secrets of Vedanta and the direct experiences of Self-realisation.

Once, while Dattatreya was roaming in a forest happily, he met king Yadu, who, on seeing Dattatreya so happy, asked him the secrets of his happiness and also the name of his Guru. Dattatreya said that the Atman alone was his Guru, and yet, he had learned wisdom from twenty-four individuals and that they were, therefore, his Gurus.

Dattatreya then mentioned the names of his twenty-four Gurus and spoke of the wisdom that he had learnt from each:

“The names of my twenty-four teachers are: 1. Earth, 2. Water, 3. Air, 4. Fire, 5. Sky, 6. Moon, 7. Sun, 8. Pigeon, 9. Python, 10. Ocean, 11. Moth, 12. Bee, 13.

Honey-gatherer, 14. Elephant, 15. Deer, 16. Fish, 17. Dancing-girl Pingala, 18. Raven, 19. A Child, 20. Maiden, 21. Serpent, 22. An arrow-maker, 23. Spider and 24. Beetle.”

1. I learnt patience and doing good to others from the EARTH, for it endures every injury man commits on its surface, and yet it does him good by producing crops, trees, etc.

2. From WATER I have learnt the quality of purity. Just as the pure water cleanses others, so also the sage, who is pure and free from selfishness, lust, egoism, anger, greed, etc., purifies all those who come in contact with him.

3. The AIR is always moving through various objects, but it never gets attached to anyone of them; so I have learnt from the air to be without attachment, though I move with many people in this world.

4. Just as FIRE burns bright, so also the sage should be glowing with the splendor of his knowledge and Tapas.

5. The air, the stars, the clouds, etc., are all contained in the SKY, but the sky does not come in contact with any of them. I have learnt from the sky that the Atman or the Soul is all-pervading, and yet it has no contact with any object.

6. The MOON is in itself always complete, but appears to decrease or increase on account of the varying shadow of the earth upon the moon. I have

learnt from this that the Atman is always perfect and changeless, and that it is only the Upadhis or limiting adjuncts that cast shadows upon it.

7. Just as the SUN, reflected in various pots of water, appears as so many different reflections, so also Brahman appears different because of the Upadhis (bodies) caused by the reflection through the mind. This is the lesson I learnt from the sun.

8. I once saw a pair of PIGEONS with their young birds. A fowler spread a net and caught the young birds. The mother pigeon was very much attached to her children. She did not care to live, so she fell into the net and was caught. The male pigeon was attached to the female pigeon, so he also fell into the net and was caught. From this learnt that attachment is the cause of bondage.

9. The PYTHON does not move about for its food. It remains contented with whatever it gets and lies in one place. From this I learnt to be unmindful of food and to be contented with whatever I get to eat (Ajagara Vritti).

10. Just as the OCEAN remains unmoved even though hundreds of rivers fall into it, so also the wise man should remain unmoved among all sorts of temptations, difficulties and troubles. This is the the lesson I learnt from the ocean.

11. Just as the MOTH, being enamoured of the brilliance of the fire, falls into it and is burnt up, so also, a passionate man who falls in love with a beautiful girl

comes to grief. To control the sense of sight and to fix the mind on the Self is the lesson I learnt from the moth.

12. Just as the BLACK BEE sucks the honey from different flowers and does not suck it only from one flower, so also I take only a little food from one house and a little from another house and thus appease my hunger (Madhukari Bhiksha or Madhukari Vritti). I am not a burden on the householder.

13. Bees collect honey with great trouble, but a HONEY-GATHERER comes and takes the honey easily. Even so, people hoard up wealth and other things with great difficulty, but they have to leave them all at once and depart when the Lord of Death takes hold of them. From this I have learnt the lesson that it is useless to hoard things.

14. The male ELEPHANT, blinded by lust, falls into a pit covered over with grass, even at the sight of a paper-made female elephant. It gets caught, enchained and tortured by the goad. Even so, passionate men fall in the traps of women and come to grief. Therefore, one should destroy lust. This is the lesson I have learnt from the elephant.

15. The DEER is enticed and trapped by the hunter through its love of music. Even so, a man is attracted by the music of women of loose character and brought to destruction. One should never listen to lewd songs. This is the lesson I learnt from the deer.

16. Just as a FISH that is covetous of food falls an easy victim to the bait, so also, the man who is greedy of food, who allows his sense of taste to overpower him, loses his independence and easily gets ruined. The greed for food must therefore be destroyed. It is the lesson that I have learnt from the fish.

17. There was a DANCING GIRL named Pingala in the town of Videha. She became hopeless. Then she was contented with what she had, and then had sound sleep. I have learnt from that fallen woman the lesson that the abandonment of hope leads to contentment.

18. A RAVEN picked up a piece of flesh. It was pursued and beaten by other birds. It dropped the piece of flesh and attained peace and rest. From this I have learnt the lesson that a man in the world undergoes all sorts of troubles and miseries when he runs after sensual pleasures, and that he becomes as happy as the bird when he abandons the sensual pleasures.

19. The CHILD who sucks milk is free from all cares, worries and anxieties, and is always cheerful. I have learnt the virtue of cheerfulness from the child.

20. The parents of a MAIDEN had gone in search of a proper bridegroom for her. The girl was alone in the house. During the absence of the parents, a party of people came to the house to see her on a similar object in reference to an offer of marriage. She received the party herself. She went inside to husk the paddy. While she was husking, the glass bangles on both hands made

tremendous jingling noise. The wise girl reflected thus: "The party will detect, by the noise of the bangles, that I am husking the paddy myself, and that my family is too poor to engage others to get the work done. Let me break all my bangles except two on each hand". Accordingly, she broke all the bangles except two on each hand. Even these two bangles created much noise. She broke one more bangle of each hand. There was no further noise though she continued husking. I have learnt from the girl's experience the following: Living among many would create discord, disturbance, dispute and quarrel. Even among two, there might be unnecessary words or strife. The ascetic or the Sannyasin should remain alone in solitude.

21. A SERPENT does not build its hole. It dwells in the holes dug out by others. Even so, an ascetic or a Sannyasin should not build a home for himself. He should live in the caves and temples built by others. This is the lesson that I have learnt from the snake.

22. The mind of an ARROW MAKER was once wholly engrossed in sharpening and straightening an arrow. While he was thus engaged, a king passed before his shop with his whole retinue. After some time, a man came to the artisan and asked him whether the king passed by his shop. The artisan replied that he did not notice anything. The fact is that the artisan's mind was solely absorbed in his work and he did not know what was passing before his shop. I have learnt from the artisan the quality of intense concentration of mind.

23. The SPIDER pours out of its mouth long threads and weaves them into cobwebs. It gets itself entangled in the net of its own making. Even so, man makes a net of his own ideas and gets entangled in it. The wise man should therefore abandon all worldly thoughts and think of Brahman only. This is the lesson I have learnt from the spider.

24. The Bhiringi or the BEETLE catches hold of a worm, puts it in its nest, and gives it a sting. The poor worm, always fearing the return of the beetle and sting, and thinking constantly of the beetle, becomes a beetle itself. Whatever form a man constantly thinks of, he attains in course of time that form. As a man thinks, so he becomes. I have learnt from the beetle and the worm to turn myself into Atman by contemplating constantly on It and thus to give up all attachment to the body and attain Moksha or liberation.

The king was highly impressed by the teaching of Dattatreya. He abandoned the world and practised constant meditation on the Self.

Dattatreya was absolutely free from intolerance or prejudice of any kind. He learnt wisdom from whatever source it came. All seekers after Wisdom should follow the example of Dattatreya.

Chapter Seven

GURUDOM: A DEADLY CANCKER

Jatilo mundi lunchita-kesah

Kashayambara-bahukrita-veshah;

Pasyannapi cha na pasyati mudho

Udara-nimittam bahukrita-veshah

For the sake of the belly, what sort of disguise man puts on? One grows Jata on the head, another shaves his head, another puts an orange-coloured robe. Ignorant, he sees not though he sees (Sri Sankaracharya).

India, the sacred land of Advaita Philosophy, the land which produced Sri Sankara, Dattatreya, Vamadeva and Jada Bharata who preached oneness of life and unity of consciousness, is full of sectarians now. What a great pity it is! What a lamentable state you see now! You can even count the grains of sand on seashore, but it is extremely difficult to count the number of sects that are prevailing now in India. Every day, some kind of 'ism' is cropping up like mushroom to swell up the discord that is already present here. Hopeless discord and disharmony reign supreme everywhere. Fighting is going on between different sects. Dissensions and splits, suits in law-courts, skirmishes, hand-to-hand fights and scandal-mongering prevail everywhere. There is neither peace nor harmony. The disciples of one Guru fight with

the disciples of another Guru in streets and marketplaces!

YOGIC CHARLATANS AND POSING GURUS

A young man with a little training in harmonium and a little power of speech ascends the platform, poses for an Acharya or a Guru in a couple of years, publishes a few rubbish pamphlets and songs and establishes a sect of his own. India still abounds in profound stupidity and any man can have his own following in a short time.

Another young man with some training in Asanas, Bandhas and Pranayama shuts himself up in an underground cell with some eatables that are secretly kept to last for forty days. He eats some roots that destroy hunger and thirst for some days. God only knows what he is doing in the cell! He sleeps in the cell. He then comes out with pretended Samadhi. This is a little practice of Titiksha only. His Samaskaras and Vasanas are not at all destroyed. He is the same worldly man. He knocks about hither and thither to collect money and make disciples. He poses for a Yogi Guru. Ignorant, worldly people are easily deceived. The sad part of the tale is that people lose faith even in real Yogis who enter into real Samadhi, on account of the foolish actions of such posing young men who have no responsibility. These young men have not understood the gravity of Yoga and spiritual life. Samadhi is certainly not meant for demonstration on public roads. Samadhi is a sacred act. Samadhi is not jugglery or

Indrajala. This practice has become contagious. Many young men have started this show or feat.

Beware of these Yogic charlatans, daylight dupes or posing Gurus, black sheep who are infectious parasites and burden on society, who are a menace to the country and who are vultures that prey upon the resources of the ignorant and the credulous !

Some make disciples to get services when they grow old. They do not care for the advancement of their disciples.

A CAUTION TO LADIES

Ladies are very easily duped by the so-called Gurus and Acharyas. Ladies are very simple-minded and credulous. They are very easily attracted by sweet music and melody. They fall easy victims to melodious sounds. These Gurus try to hoodwink naïve womenfolk. They easily influence them and trap them without any difficulty. They make them their tools or instruments. They exploit them and fill their stomachs and move about in silken clothes and pump shoes. Householders have not got the least sanction from scriptures to make lady disciples. Those who make lady-disciples for the sake of earning a decent livelihood are worms that revel in filth. There is no Prayaschitta for these hypocrites. They are thrown mercilessly into the Raurava and Maha Raurava hells.

O Devis! Wake up now! Open your eyes. You are all educated now. Use your reason. Do not be carried away by mere lectures and music. Beware of posing Gurus. Never make a householder as your Guru. Never get Diksha from him. You will weep in the end and reap a bad harvest if you do so. That man whom you select as your Guru should be of an exemplary and spotless character. He should be absolutely selfless and be free from lust and greed. He should be free from all sorts of worldly taints. He should have knowledge of the Vedas and scriptures. He must have inner spiritual strength and Self-realisation to elevate you and lead you in the spiritual path.

Husbands should not allow their wives to take anyone as their Guru without proper scrutiny or thorough examination and understanding of the person whom they want to take as Guru. If they really feel so much for taking a Guru, they should select one after careful study and enquiry and after living with him for a long time. Husband and wife should not have different Gurus. Fighting comes in. They should have a common Guru.

THE MENACE OF SECTS AND CULTS

Lord Chaitanya, Guru Nanak, Swami Dayananda were all catholic, exalted souls. All their teachings were sublime and universal. They never wanted to establish sects or cults of their own. Had they lived now, they would have wept at the actions of their followers. It is

the followers who commit serious mistakes and blunders. They have not developed a large heart. They are petty-minded. They create dissensions, party-spirit and all sorts of trouble.

A spiritual leader should never establish a sect of his own. He should have a far-reaching insight. Founding a sect means creation of a fighting centre to disturb the peace of the world. He does more harm than good to the country. He can have an institution with broad, universal principles and doctrines that will not at all conflict with the principles and doctrines of other religions and can be universally accepted and followed by all.

Here are the characteristics of a real Guru. If you find these qualifications in any man, accept him at once as your Guru. A real Guru is one who is a Brahma-Nishta and a Brahma-Srotri. He has full knowledge of the Self and the Vedas. He can dispel the doubts of aspirants. He has equal vision and balanced mind. He is free from Raga-Dvesha, Harsha, Soka, egoism, anger, lust, greed, Moha, pride, etc. He is an ocean of mercy. In his mere presence one gets Santi and elevation of mind. In his mere presence, all doubts of aspirants are cleared. He does not expect anything from anybody. He has an exemplary character. He is full of joy and bliss. He is in search of real aspirants!

Salutations to the Lotus-Feet of a Guru! I fully believe in a real Guru. I have great adorations for a Guru. My heart longs to serve his Lotus-Feet for ever. I

believe that there is no purifier more powerful than the service of a Guru in removing the impurities of the mind. I fully believe that the only safe boat that can take us to the other shore of Immortality is the company of a Guru.

COMMERCIAL GURUDOM

But I dislike commercial Gurudom. I strongly resent the actions of hypocrites who pose for Gurus and Acharyas and move about making disciples and collecting money. You will all agree with me on this point. There cannot be any two opinions in this direction. They are the pests of society. Gurudom has come to be mere business. It must be thoroughly eradicated from the soil of India. It is doing great havoc and harm to the people of India. It is creating a very bad impression in the minds of the Westerners and people of different countries. India is losing its spiritual glory on account of this Gurudom business. Drastic steps should be taken immediately to nip this serious malady and destroy it to its very root. No stone should be left unturned in its eradication. It has assumed a hideous shape. It has become very contagious. Many have taken to this Gurudom business as an easy means of decent livelihood. Poor ignorant ladies and gentlemen are exploited by these pseudo-Gurus on an enormous scale. What a shame!

Many Gurus move about hither and thither. They deliver lectures and conduct discourses. They know

Brahma Sutras and Gita by heart, but they have no knowledge and meditation. They are easily irritated. Their Abhimana is very stiff. They lack in divine attributes and Sadhutva. They have no spirit of service. They speak ill of service, Kirtan, etc. They catch many people by the arm. They bless them by placing their hands on their backs. But, they are not able to send one man across to final Salvation or beatitude.

The public will take a man to be a Guru only if he exhibits some Siddhis. It is a serious mistake. They must not be over-credulous. They will be easily duped by these Yogic charlatans. They must use their power of discrimination and reasoning. They must study the ways, habits, nature, conduct, Vritti, Svabhava, etc., of the Guru and test his knowledge of scriptures, before they come to any definite conclusion.

It is better to take Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Lord Siva, the Indweller of your heart as your Guru and repeat His Mantra instead of approaching these black sheep who mislead and ransack the people of this country.

May the glorious India abound in real Gurus like Sri Sankara or Sri Dattatreya! May she be absolutely free from these pseudo-Gurus and Gurudom itself which is a deadly curse! May the universal Principles of Sanatana Dharma flourish in the world! May the spiritual leaders try their level best to unite the various sects and cults! Let them not establish new cults. May this sectarian fighting and quarrel cease for ever! May

this land always keep up the reputation and prestige of a spiritual country with saints, seers, Yogis, Bhaktas and Sannyasins with Tyaga, Renunciation and Self-realisation as the goal! May unity, peace and harmony prevail throughout the world! May the blessings of Gurus be upon us All! May they guide us in the path of spirituality!

Chapter Eight

A TALK TO SANNYASINS

*Apatavairagyavato Mumukshun
Bhavabdhiparam Pratiyatumudyatan;
Asagraho Majjayatentarale
Nigrihya Kanthe Vinivartya Vegat.*

Those seekers after Liberation who are endowed with only an apparent dispassion and are endeavouring to cross the ocean of Samsara or conditioned existence are seized by the shark of hankering; and so seized by the neck and forcibly dragged into the middle, are drowned (*Vivekachudamani*).

Hari Om! Adorations to Brahman! Salutations to Sri Sankara, Maha Purushas and Sannyasins!

A Sannyasin is one who has renounced (*nyasa*) the *Deha-Adhyasa* (body-idea), selfishness, Vasanas, egoism, Abhimana. The four Kumaras of Brahma (Sri Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata), Sri Dattatreya and Sri Sankara are the pioneers in this path of pure Nivritti-Marga. They are the fathers for this Order of Sannyasins.

TREND OF THE TIMES

The world wants economic, racial, social, political, Psychological, industrial and also spiritual

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advancement. The spiritual side should never be ignored. That is the basis. That is the be-all and end-all. In these days, leaders in the Karma-Yogic field lay stress on action alone. They have totally ignored the spiritual side of life. Even Sannyasins of various institutions are doing social service only. Some Sannyasins have scholarly erudition only, and they command a little respect for sometime. They, too, have thrown aside the meditative side of life. They are not able to produce a real and lasting impression on the minds of the public, because they have not got the real spiritual stuff or inner Atmic strength at their back.

Spiritual men, Yogins, Jnanins and Sannyasins should appear on the platform like the comet or the second-day moon of the month of November (Kartika), like Lord Jesus for a short time, should time, should pour forth their energy and turn out tremendous work and disappear from the field. The work of holding spiritual classes for longer time and starting Ashrams belongs to the junior Sannyasins. It will not suit the temperament of fiery spiritual giants. They will inundate the land with spiritual giants. They will inundate the land with spiritual waters or the nectar of immortality (divine knowledge) in a short time, just as the Ganga does for four months in the year.

TEMPTATIONS OF COMFORTABLE LIVING

No Sannyasin or householder should start an Ashram for the sake of his comfortable living. Many

Sannyasins are pure in the beginning when they start an Ashram, I mean when they are poor. When they become rich, when they have got enough admirers and Bhaktas, the spirit of selfless service dwindles away, giving place to selfish motives in their hearts. The object with which they started Ashrams gets frustrated. Then it becomes a money-making institution. People have no attraction. If the head of the institution leads a life of Vairagya and absolute renunciation, the Ashram stands as a centre or nucleus of perennial peace, bliss and joy. It attracts millions of people. The world is always in need of such Ashrams with such spiritual giants as their heads.

Some young Sannyasins take a course of *nux vomica* seed, swallow a hundred and twenty seeds in two years, study Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi and Nyaya for three years, imagine they have become real Siddhas, and mix freely with worldly-minded persons. This is a very grave mistake. *Nux vomica* produces impotency. Impotency is not establishment in Brahmacharya. They will have soon a downfall. This goes without saying. Even perfect Jnanins and full-blown Yogins should be very careful. They should avoid indiscriminate, promiscuous mixing with worldly-minded persons. The sight of pairing of fish excited a developed a developed Rishi. The jingling sounds of the bangles of a lady, the sight of even bordered or coloured clothes, causes severe excitement in the mind. They have got their own impure associations. Passion is very powerful. Mysterious is Maya. Beware, O aspirants!

It is the tongue and the palate that force the undisciplined young aspirants, Brahmacharins and Sannyasins, to come in close contact with householders under the garb of doing Satsanga. O aspirants! Is it for satisfying the tongue you have left your parents, and renounced position and property and embraced Sannyasa? Or, is it for attaining Self-realisation? If it is for the former, you would have done very well by earning money in the world. Do not bring disgrace to the order of Sannyasa. If the tongue is uncontrollable, remove the gerua garb and go back to the world, do some work and earn money. Evolve through Karma Yoga. No control of mind is possible without control of tongue.

IS THIS SATSANGA?

Satsanga has degenerated in these days. It has dwindled into some kind of mental recreation or amusement. Mere Vedantic gossiping for one hour in the evening between Sannyasins and house-holders with a mixture of some idle, worldly talk, some politics, some scandal-mongering and back-biting, some silly giggling, guffaw and namby-pamby sentimental outpourings in vague platitudes is labeled as Satsanga. The minds of the Sannyasin who does Satsang and the hearers remain in the same state even after a course of Satsanga for several years. There is no elevation and spiritual progress.

When Sadhus and Sannyasins move in the world, they should show an exemplary life of Vairagya to the householders. They should get from the householders the bare necessities of life only. They should not mix with them very freely. They should live in a solitary place outside the village or town. They should conduct spiritual classes in a serious manner. They should not talk on worldly matters in the interval. They should not bring in too many stories that excite laughter. They should not cut jokes. There must be solemn serenity. The whole audience must be spellbound. There must be pin-drop silence. Then only the householders will be influenced. They will feel they have got something from the Satsanga.

KHEER-PAROTTHA BIRDS

The moment a Sannyasin begins to ask from householders several things frequently, he loses his respect and influence. He is forced to leave the place immediately. Some shameless Sannyasins live as parasites amongst householders for months together. They are 'Kheer-Parottha' birds. They are not real Sannyasins. In the coming census report, the authorities should be very careful in forwarding their reports. These persons should not come under the category of Sadhus and Sannyasins. They are professional beggars in coloured garb, like the wolf in the skin of a lamb. There must be a genuine record of true Sannyasins. What is the use of swelling the number of Sadhus and showing a

figure of 74 lakhs of Sadhus? You will not find more than 2,000 good, cultured Sannyasins who are useful to themselves and to the country at large. A real Sadhu or Sannyasin is like a glorious sun. He shines during day and night.

TRAINING OF ASPIRANTS

Rishikesh is the only best place for Sadhus and Sannyasins. Free food, free Kutirs and free cottages are available. There is a beautiful library. Medical help can be had. You can be as free as a bird. Why do you wander then here and there? If a Sadhu or Sannyasin or an aspirant really wants to attain spiritual progress and Self-realisation, he must stick to this place without stirring out even for a day, at least for a period of twelve years, and must do rigorous, constant Sadhana. Change of place is not necessary. The Ganga and the Himalayas are eternally inspiring, elevating and health-giving. A change to other places is the foolish imagination of weak-willed and deluded doctors and rich people.

A Sannyasin or Sadhu can do more solid and efficient work at the very threshold of his cottage than by moving about from place to place and delivering lectures on platforms. When the flower blossoms, it does not send any invitation to the bees. The bees come by themselves. Even so, real seekers after Truth will flock to the real Sannyasins at their very door. Sannyasins need not move about and advertise. In platform-lectures, there is only temporary stimulation

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for half an hour. There are some noise, fights, quarrels, claps, "hear, hear" sounds from some corners. Only real Adhikarins will go to meet Sannyasins at their cottages. The hearts of these aspirants can be really pierced by the instructions of Sannyasins. Training of aspirants is the highest service which a Sannyasin can do. Each aspirant will become a spiritual nucleus, or radiating or broadcasting centre of Joy, Peace and Knowledge. When a Sannyasin moves, his time is wasted. All sorts of people come to meet him out of curiosity. Nowadays, householders do not attend to their wants. They have become extremely selfish. They show some lip-sympathy by saying: "Swamiji Maharaj! *Kuch Seva Bathlayiye Mere Layak.*" This is pure humbug, hypocrisy and cunning.

When one puts on the orange-coloured robe, he must remember that he has entered a noble order of life and that great responsibility rests on his shoulders and that he is going to become soon a religious and spiritual teacher for the world. He must try his level best to possess all the noble, divine virtues and to lead an ideal life of purity and Vairagya.

Real Sannyasins are the beacon-lights and torch-bearers of the world. Just as the lighthouse sends its light to the distant steamers in the far-off sea, so also the Sannyasins radiate their divine light to people of far-off climes who are immersed in the mire of darkness and ignorance. They can move the whole world.

Glory to real Sannyasins who have renounced everything, who are treading the path of Truth! Hail, hail to Sannyasins who are resting in their own Svarupa, the Brahma-Nishthas! Glory, glory to Parivrajaka Acharyas, the Brahma-Vidya Gurus who are disseminating the Knowledge of the Self far and wide! May their blessings be upon us all!

Chapter Nine

GURU-BHAKTI YOGA

Just as Kirtan-Sadhana has been made the special Kali-Yuga Sadhana for Quick God-realisation, even so herein you have the new Yoga, a Yoga most eminently suitable for this age of doubt and skepticism, pride and egoism. It is Guru-Bhakti Yoga. This Yoga is marvelous. Its power is tremendous. Its efficacy is most unfailing. The true glory of Guru-Bhakti is indescribable. It is the Yoga par excellence for this age, which makes God appear here before you in flesh and blood and move with you in this very life. The hard Rajasic ego is the arch enemy of the Sadhaka. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is the surest and best Sadhana to destroy arrogance and to dissolve the vicious ego. Just as a particular deadly germ can be annihilated only by a certain specific chemical germicide, even so, to destroy Avidya and Ahankara, this unique Guru-Bhakti Yoga is the peerless specific. They are the gravest 'Mayacide' and 'egocide'. They become quite powerless and no longer afflict the fortunate soul who saturates himself with the spirit of Guru-Bhakti Yoga. Blessed indeed is the man who earnestly takes to this Yoga; for he will obtain crowning success in all other Yogas. To him will

accrue the choicest fruits of perfection in Karma, Bhakti, Dhyana and Jnana.

The qualification for taking this Yoga is the simple trio of sincerity, faith and obedience. Be sincere in your aspiration for perfection. Be not vague or half-hearted. Then have perfect faith in the one you have accepted as your Guru. Do not allow even so much as a shadow of doubt to approach you. When once you have reposed absolute faith in him, then know that what he instructs you is indeed for your highest good. Therefore, obey his word implicitly. Follow his teachings to the letter. Be earnest in doing thus, and take my word: you will attain Perfection; I assure you emphatically.

Now then an exposition of Guru-Bhakti-Yoga.

1. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is total self-surrender to Satguru.

2. The important eight limbs of the Guru-Bhakti Yoga are: (i) the real lasting aspiration to practice Guru-Bhakti Yoga; (ii) absolute faith in the thoughts, words and action of Satguru; (iii) doing Sashtanga Namaskara with humility and repeating Guru's name; (iv) perfect obedience in carrying out Guru's commands; (v) doing personal service to Satguru without expectation of fruits; (vi) daily worshipping of the lotus-feet of Satguru with Bhava and devotion; (vii) self-surrender or dedication of *tana*, *mana* and *dhana* in the cause of divine mission of Satguru; (viii) meditation on the holy feet of Satguru for obtaining his benign

grace, and hearing his holy Upadesa and sincerely practicing it.

3. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is a Yoga by itself.

4. It is not possible for an aspirant to enter the spiritual path that leads to the union with God unless he practices Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

5. He who understands the system of Guru-Bhakti Yoga Philosophy can only surrender to his Guru unconditionally.

6. The highest object of life, i.e., Self-realisation, is achieved through the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

7. Yoga of Guru-Bhakti is the real safe Yoga which can be practiced without any fear.

8. The essence of Guru-Bhakti Yoga lies in utter obedience in carrying out the Guru's orders and translating his teachings in life.

9. The aim of Guru-Bhakti Yoga is to free man from the thralldom of matter and fetters of Prakriti and make him realize his absolute independent nature, through complete surrender to Guru.

10. He who practices the Yoga of Guru-Bhakti can annihilate the egoism without any difficulty and he can very easily cross the quagmire of Samsara.

11. Guru-Bhakti Yoga bestows immortality and eternal bliss on one who practices it sincerely and regularly.

12. Practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga gives peace and steadiness of mind.

13. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is the master-key to open the realm of elysian bliss.

14. The goal of life is to obtain the benign grace of Satguru by practicing Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

15. With humility approach the adorable feet of Satguru. Do prostrations to the life-saving feet of Satguru. Take shelter under the lotus-feet of Satguru. Worship the sacred feet of Satguru. Meditate on the holy feet of Satguru. Offer the valuable gifts on the sanctifying feet of Satguru. Dedicate your life to the service of glorious feet of Satguru. Become the dust of the divine feet of Satguru. This is the secret of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

16. Self-surrender to the sacred feet of Satguru is the very foundation of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

17. All that is wanted of you is sincere and earnest effort in the path of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

18. Devotion to Guru is the greatest factor in the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

19. Faith in the Guru is the first rung in the ladder of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

20. The cream of Guru-Bhakti Yoga is absolute (blind) faith in the thoughts, words and actions of the Brahma-Nishtha Guru who is well-versed in the sacred scriptures.

21. The highest and easiest Yoga to practice in this age is the Yoga of Guru-Bhakti.

22. The greatest point in the philosophy of Guru-Bhakti Yoga is to identify the Guru with the Absolute.

23. The practical aspects of philosophy of Guru-Bhakti Yoga is to realize the oneness of Guru with his Ishta-Devata.

24. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is not a system which can be taught by lectures or correspondence courses. The student should live under a preceptor for many years and lead rigorous life of austerity discipline, celibacy and practice of deep meditation.

25. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is the Science of all sciences.

26. Guru-Bhakti Yoga confers immortality eternal bliss, freedom, perfection, perennial joy and everlasting peace.

27. The practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga induces non-attachment and dispassion for worldly objects and bestows Kaivalya Moksha.

28. The practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga will help the disciple to control the emotions and passions, and will give him power to resist temptations and to remove the disturbing elements from the mind and make him fit to receive Guru's Grace which takes him to the other shore of darkness.

29. The practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga bestows immortality, supreme peace and perennial joy.

30. The practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga will enable you to get rid of fear, ignorance, pessimism, confusion of mind, disease, despair, worry, etc.

31. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is the transformation of the ego-sense which consists in transmutation of individual feeling, willing, understanding, determining into infinite Consciousness.

32. The Sadhanas laid down in the Guru-Bhakti Yoga are very simple and sure ways to take to the other shore of fearlessness.

33. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is a method of strict discipline achieved through the grace of Guru.

34. Service of Guru without expectation of fruits and ever-increasing devotion to the lotus-feet of Guru is the integral Sadhana according to the Guru-Bhakti Yoga system of philosophy.

35. He who practices Guru-Bhakti Yoga without ethical perfection, devotion to Guru, etc., cannot obtain the grace of Guru.

36. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is the foundation of all other Yogas, viz., Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga, etc.

37. He who has turned his face from the path of Guru-Bhakti Yoga goes from death to death, from darkness to darkness and ignorance to ignorance.

38. Practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga offers a clear definite path for the realization of the highest end of life.

39. Practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga is open to one and all. All great souls, all masterminds have done great work through the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

40. Guru-Bhakti Yoga includes all other Yogas. Without taking recourse to Guru-Bhakti Yoga nobody can practice other Yogas which are hard to tread.

41. Guru-Bhakti Yoga school of thought gives great importance to obtaining Guru-Kripa through Acharyopasana.

42. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is as old as Vedic and Upanishadic time.

43. Guru-Bhakti Yoga teaches the way to wipe out all pains and sorrows in life.

44. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is the only unfailing remedy for the ills of life.

45. The path of Guru-Bhakti Yoga brings fruit quickly only for a worthy disciple.

46. Guru-Bhakti Yoga ends in the annihilation of ego and attainment of bliss immortal.

47. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is the best Yoga.

48. Shyness to do Sashtanga prostration to the sacred feet of Guru is a great hindrance in the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

49. Self-sufficiency, self-justification, vanity, self-control, self-assertion, procrastination, obstinacy,

fault-finding, evil company, dishonesty, arrogance, lust, anger, greed and egoism are the great stumbling-blocks on the path of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

50. Annihilate the fluctuating potency of the mind through ceaseless practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

51. When the dissipated rays of the mind are collected by the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga you can work wonders.

52. Guru-Bhakti Yoga cult greatly stresses upon the service of Guru for attaining the purity of heart, to meditate and realize.

53. A true aspirant rejoices in the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

54. First understand the philosophy of Guru-Bhakti Yoga, then put it into practice. You will succeed.

55. A very effective way of rooting out all evil qualities is to put into practice sincerely the Yoga of Guru-Bhakti.

56. Absolute faith in the preceptor is the root of Guru-Bhakti Yoga tree.

57. Ever-increasing devotion, humility, obedience, etc., are the branches of the tree. Service is the flower. Self-surrender to him is the immortal fruit.

58. You are bound to succeed in the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga if you have a firm faith and devotion to the life-saving feet of a Satguru.

59. True and sincere surrender unto the Guru is the essence of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

60. Practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga means an intense pure love for Guru.

61. No progress in the Yoga of Guru-Bhakti is possible without honesty.

62. Live in a quiet place with higher spiritual vibrations under a Guru who is a great Yogi or adept. Then practice under him the Yoga of Guru-Bhakti. Only then you can attain success in the Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

63. The ringing note of the Guru-Bhakti Yoga is unconditional self-surrender to the lotus-feet of the Brahma-Nishtha Guru.

64. According to the Guru-Bhakti Yoga school of thought Guru and God are one; hence total self-surrender to Guru is very essential.

65. Self-surrender to Guru is indeed the highest rung in the ladder of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

66. Service of Guru is a sine-qua-non in the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

67. Grace of Guru is the end or goal of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

68. A pig-headed student cannot have any definite progress in the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

69. Evil company is an enemy of a disciple who wants to practice Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

70. Give up sensual life if you want to practice the Yoga of Guru-Bhakti.

71. Everyone who longs to transcend misery and obtain joy and happiness in life should sincerely practice Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

72. True lasting happiness can be had by taking recourse to Guru-Seva Yoga. But not in external perishable objects.

73. Is there no escape from the unceasing cycle of births and deaths, pleasure and pain, joy and misery? Listen, O disciple, there is one sure way; turn away your mind from the sensual objects which are perishable and take recourse to Guru-Seva Yoga which takes you beyond dualities.

74. Real life begins when a man takes recourse to Yoga of Guru-Bhakti which bestows on the practitioner the everlasting happiness here and hereafter.

75. Practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga gives you immeasurable and immense joy.

76. Guru-Bhakti Yoga bestows on the practitioner longevity and bliss eternal.

77. The mind is at the root of Samsara or world-process. The mind is the cause for bondage and freedom, pleasure and pain. This mind can be controlled only by practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

78. Guru-Bhakti Yoga confers immortality eternal bliss, freedom, perfection, perennial joy and everlasting peace.

79. The avenue to the supreme peace begins from the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

80. Whatever may be acquired by asceticism, by renunciation, by other Yogas, by charity and auspicious acts, etc., all these are speedily acquired by practising Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

81. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is an exact science that teaches the method of overcoming the lower nature and attaining the supreme bliss.

82. Some people think that Guru-Seva Yoga is an inferior type of Yoga. They have thoroughly misunderstood the secret of spirituality.

83. Guru-Bhakti Yoga, Guru-Seva Yoga, Guru-Sarana Yoga, etc., are synonymous terms. They are one and the same.

84. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is the king among all Yogas.

85. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is the easiest, surest, quickest, cheapest and safest way for God-consciousness. May you all attain God-consciousness in this very birth through the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga!

86. Take recourse to Guru-Bhakti Yoga and regain your lost divinity.

87. Practise Guru-Bhakti Yoga and go beyond all that which cause duality and sorrow.

88. The practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga bestows on the disciple supreme peace, joy and immortality.

89. It is very easy to tame a wild tiger, lion or elephant. It is very easy to walk over the fire or water. But it is very difficult to surrender to the lotus-feet of Satguru unless a person has real aspiration to practice Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

90. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is control of mind and its modifications through the service of Guru.

91. Perfect unconditional self-surrender to Guru is the sure way to attain Guru-Bhakti.

92. The foundation of Guru-Bhakti Yoga is based on absolute faith in Guru.

93. If you really want God turn away from worldly enjoyments and take recourse to practice of Yoga of Guru-Bhakti.

94. Continue the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga without any interruption.

95. Practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga alone can make one fearless and ever happy in all walks of life.

96. Seek the immortal blissful Atman within through the practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga.

97. Make the Yoga of Guru-Bhakti the only purpose, aim and real interest in life. You will reach supreme happiness.

98. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is an auxiliary to knowledge or Jnana.

99. The chief aim of Guru-Bhakti Yoga is to control the unruly senses and the wandering mind.

100. Guru-Bhakti Yoga is one of the ancient systems of Hindu culture which leads man to eternal happiness and blissful union with God.

101. Yoga of Guru-Bhakti is a system of spiritual and mental self-development.

102. Yoga of Guru-Bhakti seeks to release man from the clutches of matter and restore him to his original state of divine glory and immortal bliss.

103. The practice of Guru-Bhakti Yoga makes the body and mind free from defects and diseases.

104. Yoga of Guru-Bhakti bestows on the practitioner physical and mental efficiency.

105. Guru-Bhakti Yoga makes a man free from suffering, pain and old age and confers longevity and everlasting bliss.

106. Guru-Bhakti Yoga includes every discipline, physical, mental, moral and spiritual which leads to self-mastery and Self-realisation.

107. Yoga of Guru-Bhakti is the science and art of mastering the forces of mind.

108. Worship the Guru with the flowers of faith and devotion.

109. Satsanga with the Guru is the first pillar in the temple of Self-realisation.

110. Grace of God takes the form of Guru.

111. To see the Guru is to see God.

112. Blind is the man who has not seen the Divine Master.

113. There is but one religion, the religion of devotion and love to Guru.

114. Devotion to Holy preceptor arises when you have no worldly hope.

115. The company of spiritual teacher wills simplify your struggle.

116. Rest in Guru and do the right.

117. Have faith in your Guru's grace and do your duty.

118. Disobedience to Guru is digging your own grave.

119. A Satguru is a continuous blessing for a disciple.

120. The heart of a Jagad-Guru is a shrine of beauty.

121. Goal of life is Service to Guru.

122. Every unpleasant incident in life is a test of your trust in Guru.

123. Disciple considers the actions. Guru weighs the intentions and motives.

124. Doubt in the Guru's action is the greatest sin.

125. Never try to appear before your Guru what you are not.

126. Obedience is the law of life for a disciple.

127. Don't miss any opportunity to serve your Divine Teacher.

128. Be sincere and earnest when you serve your Divine Preceptor.

129. To love Guru is to serve Guru.

130. To live is to serve the Divine Master.

131. Obedience to Guru is better than reverence.

132. Obedience to preceptor is better than Sacrifice.

133. Adapt, adjust, accommodate with your Guru under all Circumstances.

134. Don't talk much before your preceptor.

135. Pure love to Guru is true obedience to Guru.

136. Give the best things to your teacher first.

137. Disciple must be free from envy, jealousy, pride, without attachment, firmly devoted to Guru, free from impatience and intent upon knowing the Truth.

138. Disciple should not find fault with his own Guru.

139. Disciple should not indulge in unnecessary or idle talks before his Guru.

140. The preceptor should be regarded as the main or lower piece of the two pieces of wood (Arani) used for kindling the sacred fire, and the pupil the upper one; instruction is the piece (middle portion) that connects them and knowledge is the union that brings happiness.

141. The pure wisdom which is thus acquired from the Guru removes the Maya or delusion.

142. He, who through the favour of the Guru knows that the one Lord has become many through Maya, knows the truth and understands Vedas.

143. With the axe of knowledge sharpened by the one-pointed devotion acquired by the service and worship of the Guru do thou calmly and steadily cut asunder the tree of Samsara.

144. The preceptor is at the helm of life-boat and God is the favourable wind that drives that.

145. When a man becomes disgusted with the world and is endowed with dispassion, when he is able to reflect what his preceptor has taught him, his mind abandons its evil disposition by virtue of the repeated exercises in meditation.

146. The purity of the Mantra arises, properly knowing it from the preceptor.

147. As man is under the beginningless ignorance he cannot have Self-realisation without the preceptor. He who knows Brahman only can impart the knowledge of Brahman.

148. A wise man should worship only with undying devotion knowing the Guru to be one with the Lord and Atman.

149. Disciple should have sincere devotion to his Guru and to the Lord.

150. The disciple should serve his Guru obediently, attentively and sincerely and learn the Bhagavata Dharma or duties of the devotees of the Lord from him.

151. Disciple should serve the Guru as his God, which is a sure way of pleasing the Lord of the Universe and becoming fit for His Grace.

152. Disciple should practice non-attachment and keep company with his Divine Master.

153. Disciple should first obtain the Grace of his preceptor and follow the path pointed out by him.

154. A disciple should dwell in the house of the preceptor with control over the senses and study the scriptures.

155. The disciple should eat the food, rich or poor, good or bad, more or less, which comes from the Guru's holy hand.

156. The lower nature of mind must be thoroughly regenerated. The aspirant says to his preceptor, "I want to practice Yoga. I want to enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. I want to sit at your feet. I have surrendered myself to you." But he does not want to change his lower nature and habits, old character, behavior and conduct.

157. This change of the lower nature is not easy. The force of habit is ever strong and inveterate. It demands great strength of will. The aspirant often feels helpless against the force of old habits. He will have to develop his Sattva and Will to a considerable degree by

regular Japa, Kirtan, meditation, untiring selfless service and Satsanga. He must introspect and find out his own defects and weaknesses. He must live under the guidance of his Guru. The Guru finds out his defects and points out suitable ways to eradicate them.

158. You must equip yourself with the four means of salvation and then approach a Brahma-Srotri Brahmanishtha Guru. You must clear your doubts. You should tread the spiritual path through the aid of the spiritual illumination imparted by your Guru. You should live with him till you are moulded properly. Personal contact with a realized soul is highly elevating. If you are sincere and earnest, if you have burning desire for liberation, if you strictly follow the instructions of your preceptor, if you do constant and intense meditation, then there is no doubt that the highest goal can be achieved within six months. Take my word for it. It will really happen.

159. The world is full of temptations. Therefore neophytes should guard themselves very carefully. They should sit at the lotus-feet of their Guru's till they are completely moulded, till they get established in deep meditation. Happy-go-lucky aspirants who are independent from the beginning, who do not pay attention to the words of their preceptors are hopeless specimens. They lead an aimless life and are drifted here and there like the plank in a river.

160. The obstinate disciple clings to his old habits. He will not surrender to the Lord or personal Guru.

161. If the disciple really desires to improve himself, he must be frank with himself and straightforward to his Guru.

162. He who is disobedient, who breaks the discipline, who is not straightforward to his Guru, who cannot open his heart to his preceptor or spiritual guide, cannot be benefitted by the help of Guru. He remains stuck in his own self-created mire or mud and cannot progress in the divine path. What a great pity! His lot is highly lamentable indeed.

163. The disciple must make total, unreserved, ungrudging self-surrender to the Lord or Guru.

164. All that the teacher can do is to tell his disciple the method of knowing the Truth or the path that leads to the unfoldment of intuitional faculty.

165. The aspirant who is endowed with the four means of Salvation, hears the Srutis and the significance of "Tat Tvam Asi" Mahavakya at the feet of his Guru, and then reflects deeply on what he has heard.

166. Fix the mind on the form of Lord Hari or Lord Siva or Krishna or your Guru or any saint like Lord Buddha or Lord Jesus. Again and again try to call this mental image of the picture. All thoughts will die. This is another method, the method of Bhaktas.

167. Obedience is precious virtue, because if you try to develop the virtue of obedience, the ego, the arch-enemy on the path of Self-realisation, slowly gets rooted out.

168. To have complete obedience to Guru is a difficult task, but by trying with sincerity it becomes easy.

169. Even ordinary action requires great pain, so in the spiritual path, one must be prepared to subject oneself to some sort of discipline and try to cultivate obedience to the Teacher.

170. Far more than worship, garlanding and other outward manifestations of one's inner Bhava of adorations and worshipfulness, obedience to Guru is greater.

171. Obedience to Guru shows true reverence unto him.

172. Obedience means trying to act in the way in which the Guru would like one to act.

173. Supposing one finds that Guru will not like a certain thing, then one must not do it. It is also obedience.

174. Guru-Seva Yoga is the Yoga of selfless service rendered to the Guru.

175. Service of the Guru is service of humanity.

176. Guru-Seva removes the impurity of the mind. It is a potent purifier of the heart. Therefore serve the Guru with Bhava and feeling.

177. Service of the Guru prepares the mind for the reception of Divine Light, Knowledge and Grace .

178. Service of the Guru expands the heart, breaks all barriers. Service of the Guru is effective Sadhana for purity of heart.

179. Service of the Guru keeps the mind ever dynamic and alert.

180. Service of Guru helps one to develop divine virtues such as mercy, humility, obedience, love, faith, devotion, patience, self-sacrifice, etc.

181. Service of Guru destroys jealousy, hatred and idea of superiority.

182. He who serves his Guru will overcome 'I-ness and 'mine-ness'.

183. The disciple who serves his Guru really serves himself.

184. There is indescribable joy and peace in the practice of Guru-Seva Yoga.

185. Live to serve the Guru.

186. Get up at 4 a.m. This period is favourable for meditation on the form of Guru.

187. The disciple must lead a contented life when he lives in the house of the Guru. He must have perfect self-restraint.

188. Disciple must speak gently, sweetly and truthfully before his Guru and he must not use vulgar or harsh words.

189. Disciple should not back-bite his Guru.

190. He who back-bites his Guru goes to the Raurava hell.

191. He who lives to eat is a sinner but he who eats to serve his Guru is a true disciple.

192. He who meditates on Guru wants very little food.

193. Study of sacred scriptures from Guru without service to Guru is only a waste of time.

194. Study of Holy Scriptures from Guru without giving Guru-Dakshina to him is only a waste of time.

195. The mere reading of Vedantic texts, Upanishads and Brahma Sutras without fulfilling the Guru's wishes will neither bring good nor knowledge.

196. After serving a long time, a pure and calm mind becomes your Guru.

197. Study philosophical books as much as you like, deliver lectures throughout your global-tour, remain in Himalayan caves for thousands of years, practice Pranayama for years, do Sirshasana for the whole life, you cannot attain emancipation without the Grace of Guru.

198. The Grace of the Guru will itself in a mysterious manner enable the disciple to perceive directly the Brahmic principle within, though it is impossible for the spiritual preceptor to point Brahman as this or that, or for the disciple to understand how it is prior to his direct perception.

199. Let your mother, father and elders be your Guru.

200. Shampoo the feet of your Guru if he permits.

201. Every one should cognize the Self within himself through his own Jnana with the aid of a Guru and an understanding of the true significance of the Vedantic texts.

202. Even though one has a Guru or spiritual preceptor, it is only through his own efforts he should destroy all desires, Vasanas, egoism and attain Self-realisation.

203. To approach a Guru you must be a proper Adhikari. You should possess Vairagya, Viveka, serenity, self-restraint and Yama.

204. If you say "There is no good Guru," Guru also says "There is no good disciple." Equip yourself with the qualifications of a disciple. You will get a Satguru.

205. Guru is your redeemer and savior. Adore him and worship him always.

206. Gurudom is a deadly curse.

207. Prostrate daily before your Guru who is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute.

208. Disciple should always remember the form of his Guru, always repeat his Guru's holy name, carry out his orders and should think of nothing other than him. Here underlies the secret of Sadhana.

209. One should adore his Guru as there is no other thing greater than the Guru.

210. The Guru's Charanamrita dries up the ocean of Samsara and enables one to acquire essential wealth of self.

211. Guru's Charanamrita quenches the thirst of a disciple.

212. Remember your Guru and saints of all the times when you sit for meditation. You will get their blessings.

213. Hear the wise words of great souls and follow them.

214. Do those actions that are pronounced to be right by Sastras and Guru.

215. Guru is absolutely necessary to show the path to peace.

216. 'Vahe Guru' is the Guru-Mantra for the followers of Guru Nanak. Read Grantha Sahib. You will come to know the greatness of Guru.

217. Ever remember Guru by worshipping him, thou shalt find happiness.

218. Sraddha is faith in the scriptures, in the words of Guru, in Iswara and in one's own self.

219. The highest Sadhana is to serve Guru without expectation of any fruit.

220. Sravana is hearing of the Srutis by sitting at the lotus-feet of Satguru.

221. Service of Guru is a great purifier.

222. Guru's Grace is necessary for self-realization.

223. Have devotion to Guru as much as you to the Lord. Then only Truth will be revealed to you.

224. Stick to one Guru at all times.

225. Isvara is Adi-Guru who is not conditioned by space and time. From eternity to eternity He is the Guru of mankind.

226. Guru is absolutely necessary to awaken the Kundalini Sakti from its dormant state.

227. The beginning of discipleship is Brahmacharya and service to Guru.

229. The garb of discipleship is devotion to Guru.

230. The mark of discipleship is dedication of life to the lotus-feet of Guru.

231. The royal road to discipleship is regular meditation on the form of Gurudev.

232. The foundation of discipleship is utter obedience to Guru Maharaj.

233. Mumukshutva is burning longing for meeting the Guru and serving him.

234. Worship of gods, the twice-born, the spiritual teachers and the wise, purity, straightforwardness, celibacy and non-injury are called the austerity of the body.

235. Prostrations to Brahmins, holy preceptors and the wise, celibacy, non-injury, constitute physical Tapas.

236. Service of parents and preceptor, the poor and the sick, is also bodily austerity.

237. Adaptability is a rare virtue or noble quality, by which the disciple adapts or fits himself with his Guru, whatever his nature may be.

238. Now-a-days the vast majority of aspirants do not know how to adjust and accommodate themselves with Guru-Bhais.

239. The disciple must know how to adapt and adjust with his Guru.

240. Humility and obedience are necessary for developing Guru-Bhakti.

241. When the disciple does not know how to adapt himself with his co-disciples who are living under the same Guru, friction comes and he will displease his Guru.

242. The captain of a ship is ever alert. A fisherman is ever alert. A surgeon in the operation-theatre is ever alert. Even so a thirsting hungry disciple should be ever alert in the service of his Guru.

243. A drowsy, dull, heavy, inactive, sluggish, stupid-minded disciple cannot serve his Guru to his satisfaction.

244. A disciple who is endowed with the virtue of application gets success in the service of his Guru. Prosperity and immortality are his attendants.

245. Disciple should have aspiration or burning desire to serve his Guru.

246. Devotion to Guru is the one true aim of all right human aspirations.

247. Disciple should have an attentive ear when he studies under a Guru and he should have an attentive eye when he serves him.

248. Disciple should behave well with his Guru, parents, elders, saints and sages of all climes.

249. To behave well means to conduct well oneself with his Guru.

250. Guru can know the nature of the disciple and the nature of his mind from his behavior.

251. Good behavior with his holy master is a passport to the abode of bliss.

252. Disciple should not be whimsical when he serves his Guru.

253. Behaviour is expression of practical knowledge which is derived from the service of one's Guru.

254. Divine virtues and noble qualities cannot be purchased from the shops. These can be acquired through faith, devotion and service to Guru for a long time.

255. Even if you are a man of great erudition and rich, you must be very humble before Gurus and great souls.

256. A disciple, who is not learned but who is an embodiment of humility, is very much loved by his Guru.

257. If you want to drink water at the tap, you will have to bend yourself. Even so if you want to drink the spiritual nectar of immortality which flows from the holy lips of Guru you will have to be an embodiment of humility and meekness.

258. Guru's Grace descends upon those who feel utterly humble and faithful to him.

259. There is no better flower than humility to worship the lotus-feet of the Master.

260. Faith is confidence and trust in Guru.

261. Faith is belief in statements, utterances, actions, writings and teachings of one's holy preceptor and great souls.

262. Faith is firm conviction of the truth of what is declared by preceptor by way either of testimony or authority without any other evidence of proof.

263. Have perfect faith in Guru and surrender your entire being unto Him. He will take care of you. All fear, obstacles and tribulations will vanish in toto.

264. Firm faith in Sat-guru elevates the soul purifies the heart and leads to Self-realisation.

265. Disciple's motto must be intense faith in the Teachings of the Guru.

266. Obedience is willingness to obey the commands of Guru and elders.

267. Only the disciple who obeys his Guru can have command over his lower self.

268. From obedience to Guru springs all other divine virtues such as humility, devotion, egolessness, etc.

269. True obedience to Guru neither procrastinates nor questions.

270. Obedience to Guru is the mother of success in all undertaking.

271. True obedience to Guru is the performance of what is commanded by him and abstaining from what is prohibited.

272. A hypocritical disciple obeys his Guru from fear. The true disciple obeys his Guru with pure love, for love's sake.

273. Let the disciple's first lesson be obedience to Guru.

274. Goodness is a river that flows from the Lotus-Feet of the Lord by the path of obedience to Guru.

275. If the heart of the disciple is not satisfied, it shows that obedience to Guru is not fully observed by the disciple.

276. Your offerings please Guru according to your zeal and Bhava and not according to their nature.

277. The disciple should serve his master with great zeal and care.

278. If an aspirant will not serve his Guru with faith and devotion all his vows and austerities will certainly leak out as water from an urburnt pot.

279. Control of mind and senses, meditation on Guru-Bhagavan, patience while serving him, forbearance, compassion, cleanliness, truthfulness, straightforwardness, humility and obedience to the Guru are the characteristics of a good disciple.

280. The seeker after truth should dwell in the house of his preceptor with control over his senses and mind, and should study the scriptures under him with great faith and reverence.

281. He should observe strict Brahmacharya, and should offer worship to the preceptor.

282. A disciple should regard the preceptor as God Himself and should not look upon him as a man.

283. He should not find out defects in the preceptor because Guru represents all the gods.

284. Disciple should bring alms to the preceptor and must feed him with great faith and devotion.

285. Disciple should shun all comforts as poison and should surrender his body in the service of his Guru.

286. Disciple should offer Dakshina to his preceptor after studying scriptures and with his permission he should return to his home.

287. He who uses 'Gurudom' as a means of livelihood is a destroyer of religion.

288. The main duty of a Brahmachari is wholehearted selfless service to his preceptor.

289. Tapas, pilgrimage, charitable gifts, are not so helpful to attain Guru's Grace as personal service and utter obedience to him.

290. The Vedas direct perception, sayings of Guru and inference are the four proofs of knowledge.

291. All works bear the seed of sorrow but not service rendered to Guru.

292. At any time disciple should be ready to give up wealth, enjoyment, comforts, happiness and even his own body to carry out Guru's commands.

293. He who surrenders his Tana, Mana and Dhana at the feet of his Master develops Guru-Bhakti.

294. Whatever promotes devotion to the feet of the Master is highest Dharma.

295. Niyama consists of Japa of Guru-Mantra, doing austerity while serving Guru, faith in the words of Guru, Acharya-Sevana, contentment, purity, studying the scriptures and Guru-Bhakti or Surrender to Guru.

296. Titiksha is the bearing of grief or affliction while carrying out Guru's command.

297. Tyaga is the giving up works which Guru prohibits.

298. The disciple can control his mind by doing personal service to Guru.

299. That food which is left by Guru after his meal is the most Sattvic food.

300. Guru is the veritable God on earth and he is the true friend and reliable relative.

APPENDIX

ESSENCE OF GURU GITA

मंगलाचरणं शिष्टाचाराद्वै फलदर्शनात् ।

मंगलं भगवान् विष्णुर्मंगलं गरुडध्वजः ।

मंगलं पुण्डरीकाक्षो मंगलायतनं हरिः ॥१॥

The Auspicious Peace-chanting should be done in the beginning as it is the custom of righteous people and as it brings the desired fruit. Bhagavan Vishnu is the Auspicious. The Lord who is Lotus-eyed is Auspicious. The Lord Hari is the Abode of Auspiciousness. (1)

सच्चिदानन्दकन्दाय जगदंकुरहेतवे ।

सदोदिताय पूर्णाय नमोऽनन्ताय विष्णवे ॥२॥

Prostration to the Infinite Vishnu who is Full and ever exalted, who is the cause of the sprout of the whole universe, who is the highest manifestation of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. (2)

सत्यानन्दस्वरूपाय बोधैकसुखकारिणे ।

नमो वेदान्तवेद्याय गुरवे बुद्धिसाक्षिणे ॥३॥

Prostration to the Guru who is the witness of the intellect, who is to be known through the Vedanta, who

is the Source of Absolute Consciousness-Bliss who is the Essence of Truth and Bliss. (3)

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुर्गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुः साक्षात् परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥४॥

Guru is Brahma. Guru is Vishnu. Guru is Siva. Guru is the Supreme Brahman Itself. Prostration to that Guru. (4)

अज्ञानतिमिरान्धस्य ज्ञानांजनशलाकया ।

चक्षुरुन्मीलितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥५॥

Prostration to that Guru, who, through the collyrium of Knowledge, opens the eye of him who is blinded by the gloom of ignorance. (5)

स्थावरं जंगमं व्याप्तं यत्किञ्चित्सचराचरम् ।

त्वंपदं दर्शितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥६॥

Prostration to that Guru, who shows the Truth of the word 'Thou', who pervades the whole universe of mobile and immobile creation with its stationary and moving creatures. (6)

अखण्डमण्डलाकारं व्याप्तं येन चराचरम् ।

तत्पदं दर्शितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥७॥

Prostration to that Guru, who shows the truth of the word 'That', who pervades the whole universe of

mobile and immobile creation in the form of the
Undivided Infinite. (7)

चिन्मयं व्यापितं सर्वं त्रैलोक्यं सचराचरम् ।
असित्वं दर्शितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥८॥

Prostration to that Guru, who shows the Truth of the word 'Art' (in the sentence 'That thou art'), who, in the form of the Mass of Consciousness, pervades the whole of the three worlds with their mobile and immobile inhabitants. (8)

चैतन्यं शाश्वतं शान्तं व्योमातीतं निरंजनम् ।
नादबिन्दुकलातीतं तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥९॥

Prostration to that Guru, who is beyond Nada, Bindu and Kala, who is Pure Consciousness, Eternal, Peaceful, beyond space and untainted. (9)

यत्सत्येन जगत्सत्यं यत्प्रकाशेन भाति यत् ।
यदानन्देन नन्दन्ति तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥१०॥

Prostration to that Guru, due to whose Existence the world exists, due to whose Effulgence the world is illumined, due to whose Bliss all are happy. (10)

न गुरोरधिकं तत्त्वं न गुरोरधिकं तपः ।
न गुरोरधिकं ज्ञानं तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥११॥

There is no reality beyond Guru. There is no penance beyond Guru. There is no knowledge beyond Guru. Prostration to that Guru. (11)

ध्यानमूलं गुरोर्मूर्तिः पूजामूलं गुरोः पदम् ।
मन्त्रमूलं गुरोर्वाक्यं मोक्षमूलं गुरोः कृपा ॥१२॥

The form of Guru is the root of meditation. The feet of Guru are the root of worship. The teaching of the Guru is the root of all Mantras. The Grace of Guru is the root of Salvation. (12)

गुरुपादोदकं पानं गुरोरुच्छिष्टभोजनम् ।
गुरुमूर्तेः सदा ध्यानं गुरोर्नाम सदा जपः ॥१३॥

The water with which the feet of the Guru are washed is the sacred drink. The remains after Guru's meal are the proper food. Right meditation is on the Form of Guru. Constant Japa is of Guru's Name. (13)

अज्ञानमूलहरणं जन्मकर्मनिवारणम् ।
ज्ञानवैराग्यसिद्ध्यर्थं गुरोः पादोदकं पिबेत् ॥१४॥

For the purpose of acquiring knowledge and dispassion, one should drink the water with which Guru's feet are washed, which cuts at the root of ignorance, which overcomes birth and the bondage of Karma. (14)

काशीक्षेत्रं निवासश्च जाह्नवी चरणोदकम् ।

गुरुर्विश्वेश्वरः साक्षात् तारकं ब्रह्म निश्चयम् ॥१५॥

Kashi is the abode. Ganga is the water with which Guru's feet are washed. Siva himself is the Guru. The Taraka Mantra is undoubtedly the Supreme Brahman.

(15)

आसनं शयनं वस्त्रं वाहनं भूषणादिकम् ।

साधकेन प्रदातव्यं गुरुसन्तोषकारणम् ॥१६॥

The aspirant (disciple) should please the Guru by offering him seat, bedding, clothing, vehicle, ornaments, etc.

(16)

शरीरमिन्द्रियं प्राणानर्थस्वजनबान्धवान् ।

आत्मदारादिकं सर्वं सद्गुरुभ्यो निवेदयेत् ॥१७॥

One should offer to the true Guru, one's body, senses, life, wealth, friends, relatives, the self, the wife and all.

(17)

गुरुरेको जगत्सर्वं ब्रह्मविष्णुशिवात्मकम् ।

गुरोः परतरं नास्ति तस्मात् सम्पूजयेद् गुरुम् ॥१८॥

The Guru alone is the whole world, including Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Nothing greater than Guru exists. Therefore Guru is to be worshipped.

(18)

कर्मणा मनसा वाचा सर्वदाऽऽराधयेद् गुरुम् ।

दीर्घदण्डं नमस्कृत्य निर्लज्जो गुरुसन्निधौ ॥१९॥

Without any feeling of shame one should fall in full prostration before the Guru and adore the Guru through action, mind and speech, at all times. (19)

सप्तसागरपर्यन्तं तीर्थस्नानफलं तु यत् ।

गुरुपादपयोबिन्दोः सहस्रांशेन तत्फलम् ॥२०॥

The baths taken in pilgrimages to the seven oceans bring only a thousandth part of the effect produced by drinking a drop of the water that is used for washing Guru's feet. (20)

शिवे रुष्टे गुरुस्त्राता गुरौ रुष्टे न केशचन ।

लब्ध्वा कुलगुरुं सम्यग् गुरुमेव समाश्रयेत् ॥२१॥

When God is angry, Guru is the Saviour. When Guru gets angry none is the savior. Hence, obtaining the family-Guru (a suitable Guru), one should properly take shelter under him. (21)

श्रीनाथचरणद्वन्द्वं यस्यां दिशि विराजते ।

तस्यां दिशि नमस्कुर्याद् भक्त्या प्रतिदिनं प्रिये ॥२२॥

Daily one should devoutly prostrate oneself in that direction in which shines the pair of the feet of the Lord of Lakshmi. (22)

ब्रह्मानन्दं परमसुखदं केवलं ज्ञानमूर्तिं
 द्वन्द्वातीतं गगनसदृशं तत्त्वमस्यादिलक्ष्यम् ।
 एकं नित्यं विमलमचलं सर्वधीसाक्षिभूतं
 भावातीतं त्रिगुणरहितं सद्गुरुं तं नमामि ॥२३॥

I prostrate myself before that Guru, the Existence, devoid of three Gunas, beyond comprehension, the witness of all mental functions, changeless and pure, one and eternal, transcending the pairs of opposites, expansive like the sky, reachable through the sentences like "Thou art That," the Bliss of Brahman, the Giver of Supreme Happiness, the Mass of Absolute Wisdom.

(23)

आनन्दमानन्दकरं प्रसन्नं
 ज्ञानस्वरूपं निजभावयुक्तम् ।
 योगीन्द्रमीड्यं भवरोगवैद्यं
 श्रीसद्गुरुं नित्यमहं नमामि ॥२४॥

I constantly prostrate myself before the blessed Guru, who is the physician for the disease of Samsara, who is the adorable Lord of Yogis, who is blissful, who is the Source of Happiness, who is always pleased, who is the Essence of Knowledge, who is identical with the Real Existence.

(24)

हृदम्बुजे कर्णिकमध्यसंस्थं
 सिंहासने संस्थितदिव्यमूर्तिम् ।

ध्यायेद् गुरुं चन्द्रकलाप्रकाशं
सच्चित्सुखाभीष्टवरं दधानम् ॥२५॥

One should meditate on the Divine Form of the Guru, as seated in the centre of the lotus of the heart, as installed on the grand throne, who shines like the luster of the moon, who is ready to give the desired boon of the attainment of the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. (25)

नित्यशुद्धं निराभासं निराकारं निरंजनम् ।
नित्यबोधं चिदानन्दं गुरुं ब्रह्म नमाम्यहम् ॥२६॥

I prostrate myself before that Guru, the Brahman, the Consciousness-Bliss, the eternal Knowledge, the taintless, the formless, the reflectionless (beyond appearances), the Pure, the eternal. (26)

गुरुं त्वंकृत्य हुंकृत्य गुरुसान्निध्यभाषणः ।
अरण्ये निर्जले देशे सम्भवेद् ब्रह्मराक्षसः ॥२७॥

One who addresses the Guru as “thou,” who says “hum” before the Guru, becomes a Brahma-Rakshasa (a formidable demon) in a waterless forest tract. (27)

नित्यं ब्रह्म निराकारं निर्गुणं बोधयेत्परम् ।
भासयन् ब्रह्मभावं च दीपो दीपान्तरं यथा ॥२८॥

One should know the Supreme Brahman, the eternal, the formless, the quality-less, by affirming his

being Brahman Itself, as a light is in relation to another light. (28)

वन्देऽहं सच्चिदानन्दं भावातीतं जगद्गुरुम् ।
नित्यं पूर्णं निराकारं निर्गुणं त्वात्मसंस्थितम् ॥२९॥

I adore the Satchidananda, which is beyond the reach of thought, the Master of the Universe, eternal, full, formless, quality-less, indwelling as the Self of all. (29)

गुरुः शिवो गुरुर्देवो गुरुर्बन्धुः शरीरिणाम् ।
गुरुरात्मा गुरुर्जीवो गुरोरन्यत्र विद्यते ॥३०॥

Guru is Siva. Guru is God. Guru is the relative (friend) of human beings. Guru is the Atman. Guru is the Jiva. There is nothing other than Guru. (30)

ज्ञानहीनो गुरुस्त्याज्यो मिथ्यावादी विडम्बकः ।
स्वविश्रान्तिं न जानाति परशान्तिं करोति किम् ॥३१॥

The Guru who has no knowledge, who is a liar and a hypocrite should be shunned. He does not know how to bring peace to himself. How can he give peace to others? (31)

पाखण्डिनः पापरता नास्तिका भेदबुद्धयः ।
स्त्रीलम्पटा दुराचाराः कृतघ्ना बकवृत्तयः ॥३२॥

They are not Gurus who are infidels, who are given to sin, atheists, of differentiating temperaments, who

take pleasure in women, who are of bad conduct, ungrateful and roguish. (32)

निरस्तसर्वसन्देहमेकीकृत्य सुदर्शनम् ।

रहस्यं यो दर्शयति भजामि गुरुमीश्वरम् ॥३३॥

I take refuge in the Lord, the Guru, who shows the inner secret by brushing aside all phenomenality, by removing all doubts, and by integrating the consciousness. (33)

गुरवो बहवः सन्ति शिष्यवित्तापहारकाः ।

तमेकं दुर्लभं मन्ये शिष्यहत्तापहारकम् ॥३४॥

There are many Gurus who extract the life out of their disciples; but rare is that Guru who removes the pain in the heart of the disciples. (34)

चातुर्यवान् विवेकी च अध्यात्मज्ञानवाञ्छुचिः ।

मानसं निर्मलं यस्य गुरुत्वं तस्य शोभते ॥३५॥

His Guruship really shines who is very able, discriminative, full of spiritual wisdom, pure, and mentally bright. (35)

गुरवो निर्मलाः शान्ताः साधवो मितभाषिणः ।

कामक्रोधविनिर्मुक्ताः सदाचाराः जितेन्द्रियाः ॥३६॥

Gurus are pure, peaceful, good-natured, speaking very little, devoid of passion and anger, of righteous conduct, and self-controlled. (36)

एकाक्षरप्रदातारं यो गुरुं नैव मन्यते ।

शुनां योनिशतं गत्वा चण्डालेष्वभिजायते ॥३७॥

He who does not care for the Guru who gives him initiation into the mono-syllable (OM), goes to the wombs of dogs in hundreds of births, and is born among pariahs. (37)

गुरुत्यागाद्भवेन्मृत्युर्मन्त्रत्यागाद्दरिद्रता ।

गुरुमन्त्रपरित्यागी रौरवं नरकं व्रजेत् ॥ ३८ ॥

Death is inevitable to him who abandons the Guru. Poverty catches hold of him who abandons the Guru-Mantra. He goes to the Raurava hell who abandons the Mantra given by the Guru. (38)

सप्तकोटिमहामन्त्राश्चित्तविभ्रमकारकाः ॥

एक एव महामन्त्रो गुरुरित्यक्षरद्वयम् ॥३९॥

The seven crores of great Mantras are all for the bewilderment of the mind. There is only one great Mantra, the two-lettered word "Gu-ru." (39)

गुकारश्चान्धकारश्च रुकारस्तन्निरोधकृत् ।

अन्धकारविनाशित्वाद् गुरुरित्यभिधीयते ॥४०॥

"Gu" is darkness. "Ru" is its remover. Because one removes darkness, he is called a "Guru." (40)

श्रद्धालुर्मुक्तिवाक्येषु वेदान्तज्ञानलिप्सया ।

उपायनकरो भूत्वा गुरुं ब्रह्मविदं व्रजेत् ॥ ४१ ॥

One should, full of devotion; go to a Brahman-knowing Guru, with offerings to the Guru, desiring to acquire the knowledge of the Vedanta, with faith in the sentences declaring the Final Emancipation. (41)

श्रवणं तु गुरोः पूर्वं मननं तदनन्तरम् ।

निदिध्यासनमित्येतत् पूर्णबोधस्य कारणम् ॥ ४२ ॥

First is the hearing in front of the Guru. After that is the reflection upon (what is this word). Then profound meditation becomes the cause of Full Knowledge. (42)

यथा यथा जात्यन्धस्य रूपज्ञानं न विद्यते ।

तथा गुरूपदेशेन विना कल्पकोटिभिस्तत्त्वज्ञानं न

विद्यते ॥ ४३ ॥

Even as born-blind man has no knowledge of forms, so one cannot get the Knowledge of the Reality even in crores of creation-cycles, except through initiation by the Guru. (43)

यदा सद्गुरुकटाक्षो भवति तदा

भगवत्कथाश्रवणध्यानादौ श्रद्धा जायते ।

शान्तो दान्तोऽतिविरक्तः सुश्रद्धो

गुरुभक्तस्तपोनिष्ठः ॥ ४४ ॥

When the Grace of the Guru descends, then faith in hearing the stories of God, in meditation, etc. dawns. The disciple should be tranquil, self-controlled, extremely dispassionate, full of great faith, devoted to the Guru, and established in austerity. (44)

शिष्यो ब्रह्मनिष्ठं गुरुमासाद्य प्रदक्षिणपूर्वकं
दण्डवत् प्रणम्य प्राञ्जलिर्भूत्वा विनयेनोपसंगम्य ।
भगवन् गुरो मे परमतत्त्वरहस्यं
विविधं वक्तव्यमिति ॥४५॥

The disciple, approaching the Brahmanishtha Guru, circumambulating round him, prostrating himself before him, saluting him with folded hands, with much humility, should ask, "O Lord, O Guru, tell me the secret of the Supreme Truth in its fullness." (45)

सर्वज्ञं सर्वगं शान्तं सर्वेषां हृदये स्थितम् ।
सुसंवेद्यं गुरुमुखात् सुदुर्बोधमचेतसाम् ॥४६॥

दिव्यज्ञानोपदेष्टारं देशिकं परमेश्वरम् ।
पूजयेत्परया भक्त्या तस्य ज्ञानफलं भवेत् ॥ ४७ ॥

He shall reap the fruit of Jnana, who, with supreme devotion, worships the Guru, who is the Parameshvara, the impartor of divine knowledge, utterly unknowable by those of dull understanding, correctly knowable through the words of the Guru, seated in the hearts of all, peaceful, all-pervading, omniscient. (46 & 47)

यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।

तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥ ४८ ॥

He who has supreme devotion to God, and to the Guru as much as to God,—to that blessed soul these truths reveal themselves. (48)

कर्णधारं गुरुं प्राप्य तद्वाक्यं प्लववद्दृढम् ।

अभ्यासवासनाशक्त्या तरन्ति भवसागरम् ॥ ४९ ॥

People cross the ocean of Samsara by sitting in the strong boat of the sentence of the Guru, blown by the wind of the power of practice and past Samskaras, and steered by the pilot, Guru. (49)

दुर्लभो विषयत्यागो दुर्लभं तत्त्वदर्शनम् ।

दुर्लभा सहजावस्था सद्गुरोः करुणां विना ॥ ५० ॥

Difficult it is to renounce sense-objects, difficult is the vision of the Truth, difficult is the attainment of Self-realisation, without the Grace of the Guru. (50)

नमः शिवाय गुरवे सच्चिदानन्दमूर्तये ।

निष्प्रपञ्चाय शान्ताय निरालम्बाय तेजसे ॥ ५१ ॥

Prostration to the Guru, Siva, the essence of Satchidananda, worldless, peaceful, supportless and effulgent. (51)

त्वं हि विष्णुर्विरिञ्चिस्त्वं त्वं च देवो महेश्वरः ।

त्वमेव शक्तिरूपोसि निर्गुणस्त्वं सनातनः ॥५२॥

Thou art Vishnu. Thou art Brahma. Thou art the God Mahesvara. Thou alone art the form of Sakti. Thou art the attributeless Eternal. (52)

नमः शान्तात्मने तुभ्यं नमो गुह्यतमाय च ।

अचिन्त्यायाप्रमेयाय अनादिनिधनाय च ॥५३॥

Prostration to Thee, the being of Peace, the great hidden Secret, unthinkable, immeasurable, beginningless and endless. (53)

नमस्ते सते ते जगत्कारणाय

नमस्ते चिते सर्वलोकाश्रयाय ।

नमोऽद्वैततत्त्वाय मुक्तिप्रदाय

नमो ब्रह्मणे व्यापिने शाश्वताय ॥५४॥

Prostration to thee, the Existence, the cause of the universe. Prostration to the One Consciousness, the support of all the worlds. Prostration to the Truth of Non-Duality, the bestower of Salvation. Prostration to the Brahman, the all-pervading and eternal. (54)

ईश्वरो गुरुरात्मेति मूर्तिभेदविभागिने ।

व्योमवद् व्याप्तदेहाय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥५५॥

Prostration to Dakshinamurti, who appears in the threefold form of God, Guru and the Self, who pervades everything with his form like the sky. (55)

निधये सर्वविद्यानां भिषजे भवरोगिणाम् ।
गुरवे सर्वलोकानां दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥५६॥

Prostration to Dakshinamurti, the origin of all kinds of knowledge, the physician to those suffering from the illness of Samsara, the Guru of all the worlds. (56)

सर्वपापप्रशमनं धर्मकामार्थमोक्षदम् ।
यं यं चिन्तयते कामं तं तं प्राप्नोतिनिश्चितम् ॥५७॥

This (Guru Gita) is the destroyer of all sins, the bestower of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. One obtains through this whatever object of desire he desires. This is certain. (57)

शुचीभूता ज्ञानवन्तो गुरुगीतां जपन्ति ये ।
तेषां दर्शनसंस्पर्शात् पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥५८॥

Who, pure in heart, full of knowledge, incessantly recite this Guru Gita—by even seeing them and touching them, one is liberated from rebirth. (58)

ॐ शान्तिः ! शान्तिः !! शान्तिः !!!

Om Santih Santih Santih!



In spite of much that has been written on the concept of a spiritual Guru, there is still a good deal of confusion, misunderstanding, and skepticism in the public mind on this vital matter.

Is a Guru absolutely necessary? Who is a Satguru? How far can he help his Chela (disciple)? What are the duties of a disciple? What is the meaning of Initiation? Want of clear-cut and definite answers to these and related questions often impedes the spiritual progress of earnest aspirants.

Under the circumstances, the present book by Satguru Sivanandaji Maharaj should come as a boon to many. Within its pages, the reader will find an authoritative, succinct and bold elucidation of the entire subject of Guru-disciple relationship.

We have great pleasure in releasing this book for the benefit of spiritually thirsty men and women all over the world. May the blessings of the Lord and the Brahma-Vidya Gurus be upon all!



ISBN 81-7052-069-X



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